The Sacred Origins of the Svayambhūcaitya and the Nepal Valley
Foreign Speculation and Local Myth*

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On the southern flank of the Himalayas, in a mountainous region that was, until recently, sparsely populated and did not allow for large numbers to make a living, the Kathmandu Valley, that is the historical Nepal (hence the designation "Nepal Valley" used in this essay), stands out as a place that could support a comparatively prosperous civilization and a diversified urban culture. The subjects of this civilization are the Newars whose Tibeto-Burmese language and other traits reveal their Central Asian origins. Over the course of time, people of different origins, many of them from the Gangetic plain, settled in the Valley and were assimilated. Hence the Newars are a mix of Central Asian, Himalayan and, to a lesser degree, North Indian people.

Early on, Nepal was drawn into the fold of South Asian religion and culture and has in that sense been part of "India" for at least eighteen hundred years.[1] However, the mountain ranges separating it from the Gangetic

*A first version of the present paper was read at the symposium "Relics, Images and Legends – Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites," held in honor of Koichi Shinohara at the University of British Columbia, at Vancouver in October 2004. I am grateful to the convener of the symposium, Jinhua Chen, for inviting me. For fruitful comments and helpful critique I am indebted to Divakar Acharya, Benjamin Bogin, Hubert Decleer, Toru Funayama, Niels Gutschow, Harunaga Isaacson, Padmanabh Jaini, Kamal Prakash Malla, Axel Michaels, Iain Sinclair and Somadeva Vasudeva. Finally, I like to thank my students Keri Cole and Bergljot Chiarucci who checked the English of this non-native speaker.

[1]This is borne out by archaeological finds in the Valley of monumental stone statues that are executed in a Kuṣāṇa style, in a stone type favoured by Kuṣāṇa sculptors. Most importantly, in 1992 the statue of king Jayavarman was discovered. According to Kashinath Tamot and Ian Alsop's reading of the inscription (which is not undisputed), the statue dates to 185 CE. For details see their updated web article "A Kushan-period Sculpture," published at `http://www.asianart.com/articles/jaya/` .

plain have, to a considerable extent, isolated Nepal. Thus it is striking how alive autochthonous deities, cults, beliefs and practices remain to this day, even though the Newars amalgamated them with the so-called Great Tradition of the Indian subcontinent by complex processes of identifications and subordinations that are characteristic for much of the subcontinent. Moreover, Nepal's relative inaccessibility, lack of natural resources and peripheral location at the edge of the subcontinent have protected it from lasting conquests by Muslim and British rulers. Hence the culture and civilisation of the Newars did not undergo the deep social, religious, political and cultural changes that accompanied Muslim and British rule in Northern India. Also, until 1950 Nepal was largely closed to westerners and hence sealed effectively from western influence. As a consequence, forms of religious practice can be found in Nepal that long since have vanished in India. This includes tantric Mahāyāna Buddhism, which has, in its original South Asian setting with Sanskrit as its sacred language, survived uninterruptedly in the Nepal Valley alone.

This survival affords the unique opportunity to base the study of Indic Mahāyāna Buddhism not only on the (often chance) survival of texts and artefacts, but also on the observation of a living tradition on the ground. Of course, the living tradition of the Newars has not been perpetuated statically; rather it has evolved and changed in the course of many centuries. In particular, the time from the second half of the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century with the consolidation of political power in the Nepal Valley and the concomitant cultural revival (see below) served as a formative period when the Buddhist tradition assumed many of the defining characteristics that still shape Newar Buddhism. Hence the Newar Buddhist tradition cannot be naïvely equated with the lost Buddhism of Northern India. On the other hand, it would also be wrong to exaggerate the scope of these changes. I do not believe that Newar Buddhism has been completely "corrupted" by the Śaiva and other Hindu traditions with which it has always coexisted, and that hence it has become "Hindu but in name." Rather, I presume that many of the peculiarities of Newar Buddhism, such as the laicized form of monasticism, are not of purely local making, but rooted in developments that originated in Northern-Indian Buddhism before its demise. Hence I think that the study of Newar Buddhism is not of mere local concern, but may have wider ramifications for our understanding of Indian Buddhism in its late phase. Thus I hope that the following deliberations about the sacred origins of the Svayambhūcaitya and the Nepal Valley may also prove of interest for scholars not working on Newar Buddhism.

For Newar Buddhists, there is no doubt about the importance of the

Svayambhūcaitya. For them it is the most sacred shrine, the focal point of their religion. The *caitya* is located about a mile west of Kathmandu on top of a hillock that is usually also called Svayambhū, or in Newari Seṃgu, Segu, or a variation thereof (see plate 1). Beyond the borders imposed by locality and caste, all Newar Buddhists accept Svayambhū as the center of their religion and, by converging there, express their identity as Newar Buddhists. Notably during the month of *guṃlā*, which coincides largely with August, many thousands of devotees from Kathmandu and its surroundings get up every morning well before sunrise, walk—often in heavy monsoon rains—to Svayambhū, ascend the steep staircase leading up the hillock from the east and venerate the *caitya* and the ancillary shrines before returning home some two hours later (see plate 2).

The historical beginnings of the Svayambhūcaitya are obscure. There are no sources attesting to its existence before the fifth century CE. What is more, the little evidence pointing to the existence of the Svayambhūcaitya in the fifth and seventh century is flimsy and far from conclusive.[2] However, I am convinced of its great antiquity because I believe it was erected in the place of a pre-Buddhist sacred site, as part of the process of introducing Buddhism to the Valley, possibly some two thousand years ago. There is, however, no "hard" evidence to substantiate this, and what follows will by need be very speculative. In the first part of this paper, I will develop the argument that the Svayambhūcaitya was built over a pre-existing, autochthonous site, but that this site's deity has not been completely dislodged. In order to strengthen my case, I will refer to other Newar Buddhist sites. Without being exhaustive,[3] I will pursue the same topic in the second part of this paper through the eyes of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, a Newar Buddhist text which was composed after the disappearance of Buddhism in India. I will first deal with its mythical account of the origins of the Svayambhūcaitya and then examine how it renders the Valley at large a sacred place, thereby compensating for the loss of the Indian Buddhist motherland. This will bring me to an examination of the role played by the Buddhist tantric goddess Khagānanā in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*.

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To start with, because of its prominent position overlooking the western

[2]See pp. 199f. of my article "A Historical Overview of the Renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya," published in the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 12 (2001), pp. 195–241.

[3]I plan to return to the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* for a more detailed analysis than I can offer at this point. Any serious study of this important text is hampered by the lack of a reliable text edition of any of the various versions (see below).

part of the Valley, I think it is likely that the Seṃgu hillock has been the seat of a shrine of sorts since the earliest times of settlements in the Valley. Note that similar hillocks in the Valley, such as Caṃgu or Cobhar, likewise accommodate sacred shrines of great antiquity upon their tops. Moreover, there is a massive rock penetrating the otherwise-level surface of the eastern peak of the Svayambhū hillock by 226 centimeters. This rock is covered by the dome of the *caitya*, but an architectural drawing and measurements attest to its existence.[4] If the present-day veneration in the Nepal Valley for even the smallest rock popping up from the earth's surface is anything to go by (and I presume it is, since I share the belief that stone worship is of the greatest antiquity in the Valley), then the penetrating rock up at Seṃgu must have been an impressive site that was naturally considered to be sacred and identified with a deity of sorts. Hence it is meaningful that with the advent of Buddhism a *caitya* was built over this stone, thereby encasing it. It is in accordance with this rootedness of the *caitya* in the local sacred topography that in spoken language it is commonly referred to not as Svayambhū (let alone Svayambhūnāth, a relatively recently coined name with obvious Hindu overtones that has no currency among Newars) but as "the deity of Seṃgu" (*seṃgudyaḥ*),[5] an appellation that is also used in historical records such as a fourteenth century inscription and chronicle.[6]

Though the following is highly speculative, I suggest that this rock had been identified originally as the seat of a powerful and, to some extent, uncontrollable female deity, as protruding stones frequently are among Newars even today. Such aniconic representations of deities are generally identified simply as *mā* (mother) or *ajimā* (grandmother). The presence of an autochthonous goddess atop the Svayambhū hillock would, moreover, be in accordance with the tendency of such goddesses to occupy, among other sites, hilltops.[7] By building a *caitya*, i.e. the Svayambhū, over this rock, this autochthonous "wild goddess" was tamed and—in a literal sense—incorporated into the fold of Buddhism. It is common practice in the Valley to build a temple or temple-like structure above pre-existing formations of rock(s) identified as mother goddesses. The roofs of such temples

[4]See figure 1 on p. 136 of my article "On the Conception of the Stūpa in Vajrayāna Buddhism: The Example of the Svayambhūcaitya of Kathmandu," published in the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 11 (1999), pp. 121–147. This drawing has been published first by Bernhard Kölver in his book *Re-building a Stūpa, Architectural Drawings of the Svayambhūnāth* (Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1992) as manuscript C.

[5]On the Newari names of the Svayambhūcaitya, see von Rospatt 1999, pp. 142f.

[6]See von Rospatt 1999, p. 142.

[7]Cf. Slusser, Mary: *Nepal Mandala*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 325.

do not fit tightly onto the walls of the shrine rooms, but rest on supports in such a way that there is a clear opening between the walls and the roof. In this way it is assured, so the common local explanation, that the goddesses are not enclosed entirely. This is supposedly necessary lest the goddesses rebel against their new housing. In this light the encasing of the rock inside the *caitya* may be construed as a form of confinement that restricts the goddess's freedom to roam and act at will and amounts to her forceful subjugation.

However, I propose that the goddess was not suppressed and obliterated by the superimposed *caitya*, but that she continued to persist in domesticated form beside the *caitya*, and does so even now. Again this is highly speculative, and all I can point to by way of evidence is the temple dedicated to the Mother Goddess that stands beside the *caitya* (see plate 3). To be sure, the present structure dates back only two hundred years, and there is to my knowledge no evidence that proves the existence of a precursor temple prior to the seventeenth century.[8] Yet, I presume that the temple connects to the autochthonous mother goddess originally present here. This would be in accordance with the identification of the temple's goddess with Hāratī,[9] the legendary wild female demon (*yakṣiṇī*)[10] who

[8]In her study of a painting that depicts Svayambhū and its environs ("On a Sixteenth-Century Pictorial Pilgrim's Guide from Nepal," *Archives of Asian Art* 38 (1985), pp. 6–36), Mary Slusser has noted that the original *paubhā* from 1565 does not depict the temple for the mother goddess Hāratī, whereas a copy of the painting made nearly a hundred years later does render the temple. Hence, she concludes, the temple must have been erected some time between 1565 and 1664. Of course, it could be argued that the copyist added the temple not because it was new, but because he wanted to rectify its omission in the original. At any rate, whatever the date of the temple, it is well possible that it was not built in order to newly initiate the worship of Hāratī at Svayambhū, but rather in order to accomodate such a preexisting cult. According to Dina Bangdel (e-mail from June 6, 2005) "the stone image of Hariti inside the shrine [i.e. the present temple which was only built in the early nineteenth century] is stylistically comparable to the Licchavi period and may be concurrent with the four Licchavi period panels found on the Svayambhu stupa base." Even so, as Bangdel also notes, this, of course, does not suffice as proof that Hāratī's presence at Svayambhū can be dated back that far. It thus has to remain an open question for how long Svayambhū has served as seat for a goddess, and when this goddess came to be identified as Hāratī.

[9]The standard spelling recorded in Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* (s.v.) is Hārītī, but among the Newars the deity is normally called Hāratī, and this is also the spelling commonly found in written sources (so for instance in the text chronicling the renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya at the beginning of the nineteenth century; see von Rospatt 2001).

[10]The *yakṣa*s and female *yakṣiṇī*s are local divinities who have their archaic origins in the autochthonous layer of Indic religions. The identification of the goddess at Svayambhū as a *yakṣiṇī* is thus in keeping with my assumption of her pre-Buddhist origins.

inspired terror and devoured children in large quantities until the Buddha tamed and converted her.[11] Her originally harmful role in the Buddhist legends corresponds to the fearful aspect of autochthonous Newar goddesses, who can bring about illness and death and inspire great terror. Moreover, like such goddesses Hāratī is known as mother—this is already attested by I-Tsing (p. 37)—and normally depicted with five (of her five hundred and more children) nestled under her cloak. Thus, the supposed identification of the autochthonous mother goddess at Svayambhū as Hāratī would make sense and be an appropriate expression of her domestication by the advent of Buddhism. Of course, it is conceivable that Hāratī was installed next to the *caitya* independently from any preexisting cult at this spot, but it should be noted that in Nepal, unlike in East Asia and, following I-Tsing (ibid.), India, she is not commonly present in monasteries or at other Buddhist sites. Mary Slusser (*Nepal Mandala*, p. 329) states that she "encountered only four bona fide Hārītī images in the Kathmandu Valley."[12]

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[11]On the cult of Hāratī see Noël Peri's "Hārītī, la mère-de-démons," (*BÉFEO* 17,3 (1917): pp. 1–102) and Brigitte Merz' essay "Wild Goddess and Mother of us all," (Axel Michaels et al., eds., *Wild Goddesses in India and Nepal*, Bern: Peter Lang 1996, pp. 343–354.), as well as her dissertation *Bhakti und Shakti. Göttliche und menschliche agency im Kontext des Heilkults der Göttin Hāratī in Nepal*, (Heidelberg: PhD dissertation Univ. Heidelberg, 2002). Select references to the archaeological and art historical evidence of the cult of Hāratī may be found in Schopen 2002, p. 385, n. 69.

[12]Iain Sinclair drew my attention to a passage in Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* prescribing that Hārītī, together with Rājānā, ought to be set up as protectress flanking (on the left side) the door that leads into the inner precincts of the monastery (see Ryugen Tanemura (ed.): *Kriyāsaṃgraha of Kuladatta, Chapter VII*, Tokyo: The Sankibo Press, 1997: pp. 23,9–24,3; cf. pp. 31,11–34,4). However, I am not aware of any Newar monasteries where Hāratī would feature in this way. Rather, I suspect that Hāratī's presence is prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* in continuity with her prominent role in the tradition of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*. As Gregory Schopen has shown in his essay "Counting the Buddha and the Local Spirits in: A Monastic Ritual of Inclusion for the Rain Retreat" (*Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30 (2002), pp. 359–388), when establishing the numbers participating in the imminent annual rain retreat, local guardian deities (*naivāsika*) are taken count of in addition to the monastery's Buddha image, and the monks and novices themselves. The three commentaries commenting on the pertinent passage in Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, namely the alleged autocommentary, the *Ṭīkā* by Dharmamitra and the *Vyākhyāna* by Prajñākara, all mention Hārītī as the prototypical *naivāsika* deity attached to a monastery. Similarly, there is the account by I-Tsing according to which "the image of Hāritī is found either in the porch or in a corner of the dining-hall of all Indian monasteries. . ." (p. 37 of the translation of J. Takakusu, *A record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in Indian and the Malaya Archipelago (AD 671–695)*, London: Clarendon Press, 1896). In this light, it is not surprising that the author of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, which in vinaya matters follows the tradition of the Mūlasarvāstivādins (see my essay "The Transformation of the Monastic Ordination (*pravrajyā*) into a Rite of Passage in Newar Buddhism," in *Words*

The theory proposed here is of course highly speculative. But it finds some corrobaration in an orally tranmsitted legend (*janaśruti*) recorded by Juddharatna Vajrācārya in his recent study of Hāratī.[13] When Śāntikara erected the *caitya* above Svayambhū, so the legend, he encountered opposition, despite the support of all the gods who joined hands in the construction work. Every morning he would find that the finial of the *caitya* had been twisted, thus preventing him from completing the *caitya*. He was finally informed by Lord Svayambhū that this was the doing of Hāratī. She had been residing before on the hillock and was obstructing Śāntikara in order to counter his designs to expel her from this sacred site because of her consumption of meat and alcohol. Hāratī would only stop sabotaging the building work if she was allowed to stay and be properly provided for. So appraised, Śāntikara addressed Hāratī and came to an agreement with her. He would initiate the regular worship of Hāratī up at Svayambhū by the *chā hāyake pūjā* with offerings of meat and alcohol, and Hāratī in turn would guard all children under the age of twelve years, look after Svayambhū and other Buddhist shrines and protect Buddhist festivals. Though not historical, this legend lends some plausibility to my theory. It, too, presumes that there was a mother goddess residing at Svayambhū before the erection of the *caitya*, that there is tension between her impure nature and the *caitya*, and that she did not allow herself to be dislodged but had to be domesticated by arrangements for her customary worship. Moreover, the legend, too, identifies this goddess as Hāratī. Of course, contrary to what the legend relates, the preexisting mother goddess would originally not have been known as Hāratī but would have assumed this identity much later, possible only in the Malla era.[14]

To be sure, the existence of such oral lore is no firm evidence, and alter-

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and Deeds: Hindu and Buddhist Rituals in South Asia, edited by Jörg Gengnagel et al., Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 2005, 199–234), allocated a place to Hārītī in his idealized layout of the Buddhist monastery. However, this allocation apparently neither reflected Newar practice, nor did it come to inform that practice. Incidentally, the prescription of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya* to count Hārītī and similar local deities as members of the monastic community undergoing the rain retreat, appears to be yet another strategy of incorporating such ambivalent, autochthonous deities into the fold of Buddhism.

[13] Juddharatna Bajrācārya: *Śrī Hārīti Māṃyā, Saṃkṣipta paricaya*, Kathmandu: privately published by Rāmeśvara Maharjana, 2001: pp. 9–11.

[14] A less striking narrative element suggesting an innate association of the site of Svayambhū with a female divine presence may be seen in the prominent role that the *bhikṣuṇī* Cundā plays in the Svayambhūpurāṇa. When, in the framing narrative of this Purāṇa (see below), Śākyamuni arrives with his followers at Svayambhū, he is welcomed and worshipped by the nun Cundā, who lives on the western top of the Svayambhū hillock where she takes care of the *caitya* associated with Mañuśrī. Though, according to the logic of the Purāṇa's narrative, Cundā abides at Svayambhū long after it has become a Buddhist place, it is tempting to regard her presence and role (which is at odds with

native theories on the origins of Svayambhū could be entertained. Notably, it might be argued that the protruding rock had been identified originally as a Śiva *liṅga*, so that the superimposition of the *caitya* would imply the appropriation of a Śaiva site by Buddhism. In this case it could be proposed that the shrine of Hāratī continued the presence of a female deity who had been existing side by side with the Śiva *liṅga*, as happens so frequently elsewhere. This deity would have been originally conceived of as the *liṅga*'s female counterpart, so that her present identity as a Buddhist deity would mirror the process of conversion of the protruding rock. In support of such a hypothesis in terms of Śaivism, one could point to the name "Svayambhū" and argue that it is derived from the original *liṅga*, which had been classified as self-arisen (svayambhū), as may happen in case of rocks, in particular when they are pointing upward. This argument would gain additional strength from the fact that the myth accounting for the name "Svayambhū" in Buddhist terms is not attested before the fifteenth century (see below), while the name itself was already used in the eleventh century and presumably before (see von Rospatt 2001, pp. 199f.). Moreover, one could refer to (isolated) voices such as the brahmin cited by David Gellner who holds that there is a *liṅga* below the Svayambhūcaitya.[15] However, there is (besides the name) no textual, let alone archaeological, evidence that would support such an interpretation of the origins of Seṃgu in terms of Śaivism. Besides, it would be more in keeping with what seems to be the general pattern of "buddhicization" in the Valley if the *caitya* had replaced an autochthonous, rather than a Śaiva, shrine.

The pattern of conversion that underlies my theory is in conformity with the oral legend cited above and will not surprise historians of religions. It essentially corresponds to what Lowell Bloss identified as the "well-known phenomenon of the history of religions whereby a new religious force assumes the sacred place and region of an older deity. ... the Buddha asserts his superiority over a regional deity, but allows the older deity to continue its original powers under the new authority".[16] How-

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the lack of a Newar *bhikṣuṇī-saṃgha* when the Svayambhūpurāṇa was composed) as corroborating evidence for the perception of Svayambhū as the seat of a goddess. In support one could point to a particular tantric song (Newari: *cacā*, Sanskrit: *caryāgītā*; such songs Newar *vajrācārya*s chant as part of their secret rituals), namely *Namāmi Namāmi Śrī Hāratī* (published in Ratnakājī Bajracharya 1999, p. 70). Together with Hāratī and Māmakī, this song invokes Cundā as a goddess, more precisely as *śrīcūḍāmaṇi bhikṣuṇīdevī*. (I take it that *cūḍāmaṇi* here refers to the *bhikṣuṇī* Cudā and not to the Bodhisattva Cūḍāmaṇi who also features prominently in Newar Buddhism.)

[15]See David Gellner, *Monk, Householder and Tantric Priest, Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 80.

[16]Lowell Bloss, "The Buddha and the Nāga: A Study in Buddhist Folk Religiosity,"

ever, what strikes me as noteworthy is that the domestication of the wild goddess at Seṃgu has, so my hypothesis, never been completed, but continues in an ongoing process of containment in which the resurfaced goddess constantly has to be kept under Buddhist control lest she revert to her original, untamed state. Consequently, the goddess continues to be surmounted by a *caitya* in her new abode, the temple next to the main *caitya*. More precisely, Hāratī's temple is—unlike other Buddhist and Hindu temples and shrines—topped by a finial (*gajur*) that has the shape of a *caitya* (see plate 4). The finial is not a mere ornamental detail, but a full-fledged *caitya* in its own right that is consecrated and treated as an abode of the five Buddhas (and hence of buddhahood) in precisely the same way as the Svayambhūcaitya and other free-standing *caitya*s would be in Newar Buddhism. Accordingly, when the temple's roof was renovated in August 1997, the *caitya* had to be first deconsecrated in order to allow work to go ahead. This, as well as the reconsecration upon the work's completion, necessitated elaborate rituals that spanned several days and were performed by a group of senior *vajrācārya* priests from Kathmandu. Thus I read the surmounting of the Hāratī temple by this *caitya* as a deliberate strategy of imbuing the temple with a Buddhist identity and containing the goddess residing there.

Hāratī's incorporation into the Buddhist fold also finds its expression on the ritual plane. Besides the simple propitiation by *pūjā* offerings, she is normally worshipped in the frame of a complex Buddhist ritual (*chāḥ hāyke*) performed by a *vajrācārya* priest.[17] Though the rite focuses on Hāratī, she is only venerated after the extensive worship of Māmakī, the consort of Akṣobhya who, in manifestations such as Cakrasaṃvara, is the supreme (male) Buddhist deity in the esoteric tantric tradition of the Newars. By embedding the *pūjā* of Hāratī in the worship of Māmakī (and of further Buddhist deities), Hāratī is also ritually incorporated into the fold of Buddhism. Hence she is, as mentioned, worshipped by a *vajrācārya* priest, rather than by lower caste officiants who are generally charged with the worship of autochthonous female deities among the Newars. Signif-

History of Religions 13 (1973), pp. 36–53: p. 45. In support of his argument, Bloss also points to the Hāratī legend (p. 44). However, his assertion that Hāratī was converted at a *stūpa* (a claim that would have nicely matched my proposed domestication of the autochthonous goddess by the Svayambhūcaitya) is based upon a misunderstanding of the English rendering of Hsüan Tsang's account by Samuel Beal (Si-yu-ki: *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London, 1884, pp. 110f). There Hsüan Tsang refers to a *stūpa* in Gandhara that was erected subsequently at the place where the conversion supposedly had taken place, presumably so as to mark it (cf. Noël Peri, p. 43).

[17]For details see Badrīratna Bajrācārya: *Daśakarmapratiṣṭhā, chāhāyeke vidhi va balimālā*, Kathmandu (published by Candramāna Mālākāra et al.), 1989.

icantly, the worship of Hāratī includes the invocation of the five female protective deities of tantric Buddhism, the Pañcarakṣās, namely Pratisarā, Sahasrapramardanī, Mahāmāyūrī, Śītavatī and Mantrānusāriṇī. These deities are identified with powerful spells (*dhāraṇī*) that ward off snakes, other wild animals and dangerous insects and also protect against illness. This protective function associates them with Hāratī who is worshipped by Newars so as to ensure the protection of children against illness. Furthermore, there is a correspondence insofar as the five individual Pañcarakṣā goddesses apparently had, like Hāratī, prior independent existences before they came to be incorporated into the fold of Buddhism.[18]

The link between Hāratī and the Pañcarakṣās is also expressed on an iconographic level, namely by the *toraṇa*, that is, the shield above the lintel of the shrine room, which in Newar temples points to the (often hidden) identity of the deity in question. In case of the Hāratī temple, the *toraṇa* depicts the Pañcarakṣās and hence equates Hāratī with these deities (see Gail, plate LVI.2 and p. 71). This equation, too, serves to incorporate Hāratī into the fold of Buddhism insofar as the Pañcarakṣās are not only protective deities, but, on a different level, are also viewed as female manifestations of the *pañcabuddha*s. The mentioned *toraṇa* alludes to this aspect of their identity by depicting the Buddha Vajrasattva above the Pañcarakṣās. Vajrasattva is equated with the principle of buddhahood from which the five Buddhas and hence also the Pañcarakṣas are emanated. Thus, by dint of her association with the Pañcarakṣās, Hāratī is also indirectly subjected to Vajrasattva and the principle of buddhahood. In addition, it may be noted that Hāratī's incorporation into the fold of Buddhism also finds its expression in the Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara-maṇḍala (which, of course, is not of local making, but a pan-Indian tradition), where she features on the north-western side of the fourth circle.

I thus propose that the conversion of the sacred site of Seṃgu to Buddhism was not a single and concluded act that happened in a distant past; rather it is an ongoing process that continues to happen to the present day. The native deity originally worshipped there is still "alive" and active, albeit in domesticated form as Hāratī, and hence constantly needs to be kept in check. As mentioned, this constant check is effected by the superimposed *caitya* atop the temple, by embedding the worship of the deity within a Buddhist framework and by equating the deity not only with Hāratī but also with the *pañcarakṣā*s, which implies her ontological dependence upon the *pañcabuddha*s and Vajrasattva. Despite these ongoing checks, the deity has not been completely subordinated, but continues to

[18]Cf. Adalbert J. Gail, *Klöster in Nepal, Ikonographie buddhistischer Klöster im Kathmandutal*, Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1991, p. 65.

retain some of her primal autonomy. This is born out by the prominence of Hāratī's cult outside the fold of male-controlled Buddhism that has come to the forefront within the last sixty years, though it may be of far greater antiquity.[19] There she is a powerful deity in her own right that possesses women (and, rarely, men). However, her possession is mainly benevolent, and accordingly the possessed media tend to act as healers drawing on the powers that Hāratī invests in them.[20]

The sense of continued ambiguity and potential danger of the autochthonous goddess at Svayambhū is heightened by the fact that her domesticating identification as Hāratī is not as extensive and pervasive as often assumed. In the pre-nineteenth-century historical records of Svayambhū that I have studied, generally the goddess is simply called "mother" (rather than Hāratī), and in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* Hāratī only features in a subordinate manner.[21] This suggests that whatever the age of the identification of the goddess next to Svayambhū as Hāratī (see n. 8), it had little currency in the medieval era; rather, she was thought of as an autochthonous mother goddess with no obvious place in the Buddhist narrative of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*. Similarly, even today most goddess shrines in the Valley continue to be known as "grandmother" or "mother" deities rather than by their Sanskrit names. Luti Ajimā ("The grandmother of Luti"), for example, is, despite her Sanskritic identity as Indrāṇī, generally thought of as the dreaded local goddess who is at home on the banks of the Biṣṇumatī and must be worshipped and appeased by an annual procession (*yātrā*), as well as by animal sacrifices. That the identification of the goddess as Hāratī, the *yakṣiṇī*, was not compelling enough to eliminate the goddess's original identity as ambivalent mother goddess is also born out by the fact that she is credited with the power to both cause and cure smallpox (cf. Merz 1996, p. 344 and Gellner 1992, p. 329), a power typically attributed to autochthonous goddesses such as Luti Ajimā. This explains why Indo-Parbatīya Hindus often identify the goddess

[19]Cf. Merz 1996, p. 347 and Gellner 1992, p. 329. In addition to the cited dissertation by Brigitte Merz (2002) there is an anthropological monograph on possession and healing among the Newars by Angela Dietrich (*Tantric Healing in the Kathmandu Valley: A Comparative Study of Hindu and Buddhist Healing Traditions in Urban Nepalese Society*, Delhi: Book Faith, 1998) and among the Tamangs by Dagmar Eigner (*Ritual, Drama, Imagination: Schamanische Therapie in Zentralnepal*, Wien: WUV-Univ.-Verlag, 2001).

[20]See the aforementioned dissertation by Brigitte Merz on this topic.

[21]More recent lore, however, seems to treat the classical Buddhist legend of Hāratī as part of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*. See, for instance, Karunakar Vaidya's account of Hāratī (pp. 147–151) in his *Buddhist Traditions and Culture of the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal)*, Kathmandu: Shajha Prakashan, 1986. Compare also Merz 1996, pp. 345f.

as the smallpox deity Śītalā rather than Hāratī.[22] The most famous example for the identification of the goddess at Svayambhū with smallpox is given by king Rana Bahadur Shah. At the end of the eighteenth century, he desecrated (and destroyed) Hāratī's image there in a fit of grief and anger, as he blamed the temple's goddess for sending smallpox to his favourite wife (who had been disfigured by the disease and in consequence committed suicide).[23] The association of the goddess up at Svayambhū with pestilence shows that she continues to be perceived, despite all efforts of Buddhism to control and contain her, as powerful and potentially dangerous in much the same way as autochthonous Newar goddesses tend to be. Her ambivalent nature as an aboriginal deity who has not been entirely converted also finds its expression in the offerings presented to her. On the one hand, she has been domesticated as Hāratī and does not receive animal sacrifices as other autochthonous Newar deities do.[24] On the other hand, there is still the perceived need to propitiate her—within the framework of the mentioned Buddhist ritual—with the typical surrogates, namely different kinds of meat from the various parts of the buffalo as well as raw duck eggs.[25] Note that the preceding observations regarding the mother goddess atop Svayambhū do not depend upon my speculative hypothesis that she was the original deity of the hillock identified with the protruding rock. Whatever her precise origins at Svayambhū may be, the goddess has the ambivalent character sketched above, and Buddhism has accordingly developed various strategies of keeping her in check in an ongoing process of containment that does not render the goddess once and for all completely subjugated.

* * *

In support of my hypothesis of the autochthonous roots of the Svayambhūcaitya, I want to turn briefly to another Buddhist site of great antiquity in the Nepal Valley, the Vajrayoginī temple of Sako (mod. Nepali: Sankhu) and the attached monastery known as Guṃ Bāhāl.[26] Unlike in other monasteries, the central exoteric deity of Guṃ Bāhāl, the *kvāpādyaḥ*, is

[22]On Śitalā and her contested relationship to Hāratī see N. Chaudhuri: "Some Cure Deities," *Indian Culture* 7,7 (1941), pp. 417–432.

[23]Cf. Slusser 1982, pp. 328f.

[24]Cf. Gellner 1992, pp. 74f.

[25]Cf. Ratnakājī Bajrācārya, *Yeṃ deyā bauddha pūjā kriyāyā halaṃjvala[ṃ] (Materials required for the Rituals, of the Buddhists of Kathmandu)*, Kathmandu: Nepāla Bauddha Prakāśana, 1980, p. 52.

[26]For of brief description of Guṃ Bāhāl see John Locke: *Buddhist Monasteries of Nepal. A Survey of the Bāhās and Bahīs of the Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press, 1985: pp. 467–9. M. Zanen treats the relationship between Vajrayoginī and

a *caitya* that is housed in a separately standing temple. The core of this *caitya* is formed by a massive, hemispherical boulder that surfaces from the ground. It measures some four feet in height and ten feet in diameter and apparently has been hewn into its hemispherical shape. It is encased by a huge silver cover in the shape of the archetypal Svayambhūcaitya, including the superstructure above the dome. The cover does not seem to be firmly attached to the rock, which is visible at the base (see plate 5). Next to the temple housing this *caitya* is a much larger temple, dedicated to the tantric Buddhist goddess Vajrayoginī, who is known here also as Khaḍgayoginī because of the sword she wields (see plate 6). She is the principle deity of the site and attracts worshippers from all over the Valley and beyond.

I believe that the similarity in the setup at Sako with that at Svayambhū is not coincidental. Again, the starting point is an autochthonous sacred site with an impressive rock that was worshipped, possibly as a goddess. With the advent of Buddhism, the rock became encased in a *caitya* and was thereby transformed into a Buddhist shrine. However, its enclosure in the kind of temple that is typically erected over autochthonous shrines such as the stone formation worshipped as Luti Ajimā (see above) signals that its Buddhist identity is restricted. Unlike at Svayambhū, the *caitya* did not become the principal shrine of the site. Rather, in accordance with the perspective of esoteric Buddhism, the dominant deity is Vajrayoginī, a form of the supreme goddess in the Yoginītantra tradition (see below). Fittingly her temple dwarfs the temple housing the *caitya* (and all other buildings). It is tempting to connect the original autochthonous deity of the site with the Vajrayoginī temple in analogy to my hypothesis that the temple of Hāratī next to the Svayambhūcaitya connects to the autochthonous rock deity encased by the *caitya*. In support one could point to an approximation of Hāratī and Vajrayoginī that finds its expression in their identification (by mediums and temple priests) as sisters (cf. Merz 1996, p. 351), though it has to be cautioned that it is a general tendency to regard *ajimā* goddesses as sister. Moreover, Vajrayoginī is said to possess mediums in the same way that Hāratī does. Conversely, it is held that Hāratī was originally not only a *yakṣiṇī*, but also had traits of a *yoginī*. Thus, if not taking care of her numerous children, she would fly around,[27] as *yoginī*s are wont to do.[28] Such a connection between Hāratī and Vajrayoginī accords with

the town of Sako in "The Goddess Vajrayoginī and the Kingdom of Sankhu (Nepal)," *Puruṣārtha* 10 (1986), pp. 125–166. More comprehensive than these studies is Balgopal Shrestha's recent PhD thesis on Sako which still awaits publication in book form.

[27]Cf. Merz 1996, pp. 347f.

[28]Cf. David G. White, *The Kiss of the Yoginī: "Tantric Sex" in its South Asian*

the well-established observation that many tantric goddesses in India have autochthonous roots. On the other hand, it has to be borne in mind that unlike the converted local *yakṣiṇī* of the Hāratī legend, Vajrayoginī is a central tantric goddess whose cult is clearly soteriological in inspiration. Thus there is far greater discontinuity between her identity and the original autochthonous goddess that I conjecture to belong to her site than there is in case of the Hāratī of the Svayambhū hillock.

There are numerous other prominent Buddhist (and also Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava) sacred sites in the Valley that presumably have been grafted upon autochthonous sacred places. An interesting case in point is the Cilaṃcva-*caitya* of Kīrtipur. It stands conspicuously on a peak and overlooks much of that town and the southwestern part of the Valley. Uniquely, there is an aniconic raw rock, rather than a fashioned statue, set in the niche of Vairocana, the central deity of the *pañcabuddhas* (see plate 7).[29] Since the niche is clearly dedicated to Vairocana, the central of the five transcendental Buddhas, the rock in a sense represents the sacred core of the *caitya*.[30] It may be speculated that this singular rock points to an earlier, autochthonous shrine, which, again, was not erased completely by the advent of Buddhism, but integrated into the new Buddhist structure erected above it. Given the shaft-like shape of the currently enshrined rock

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Contexts, Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 27.

[29]In front of this rock there is a broad vacant stone plate that may once have accommodated a statue. It seems unlikely, however, that the raw rock was placed into the niche only later in order to replace an earlier statue. Rather, as its integration into the rear of the niche behind the vacant slab suggests, the stone had apparently been placed there when the niche was constructed originally. Note that Henry Oldfield in his nineteenth century account of Nepal attests that the niche then looked as it does today (*Sketches from Nipal*, London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1880, vol. ii, p. 254).

[30]The identification of the niche with Vairocana is confirmed by the supporting lions flanking the niche that serve as Vairocana's mount. Moreover, the corresponding niche in the *caitya* at Piṃ Bāhāl in Patan houses a statue of Vairocana instead of the aniconic rock. This is significant because this *caitya* either emulates the plan of the Cilacvaṃ-*caitya* or is itself the emulated original (see Reinhard Herdicke's paper "The Daily Ritual Paths of the Bajrācāryas and Śākyas at the Cilañco Stūpas. A Ritual Topographical Study of the Correlative Stūpas in the Kāṭhmāṇḍu Valley," which is reportedly forthcoming in the Proceedings of the Eighth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held in Bloomington in 1998; cf. also the article "Remarks on the Orientation of the large Stūpas in the Kaṭhmaṇḍu Valley: A Discussion of Principles in Lunar Ordering" by the same author, published in Ch. Ramble and M. Brauen (eds.): *Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalaya*, Zurich: Völkerkundemuseum, 1993: pp. 101–123). Henry Oldfield (ibid.) confirms the identification of the stone with Vairocana when he writes about the Cilacvaṃ-caitya of Kīrtipur: "On the eastern side there is a shrine, on the right hand of that of Akshobya [sic], 'which is an unhewn stone, sacred to Vairocana.'" As for the inverted commas in this quotation, it is not clear whom, if anybody, Oldfield is citing here.

and its identification as a *liṅgam* by elder locals, one may wonder whether such an original, autochthonous shrine would have had a male identity that made it possible—unlike in the case of Seṃgu and Sako—to identify the rock with the sacred core of the *caitya*.

* * *

I want to return to the hillock of Seṃgu and its transformation into the sacred site of Svayambhū. That the hill was a sacred site even before the advent of Buddhism is not only suggested by my hypothesis of the continued presence of an indigenous goddess, but also by the many autochthonous shrines that are, usually in the form of stones and openings, scattered all over the hillock. These shrines help to transform it into a sacred "field" (*kṣetra*) that extends far beyond the Svayambhūcaitya itself. Besides those casually worshipped in passing, there are some that are more important, such as the so-called Āju ("grandfather") and Ajimā ("grandmother") stones on the lower part of the staircase. Even more important are those sacred places that are routinely worshipped as part of the formal *cākrapūjā*, which is dedicated to the most important ancillary shrines at Seṃgu and performed on particular occasions to complement the worship of the main deity, i.e. the Svayambhūcaitya.

Moreover, there are the five shrines (*pura*) identified with the five elements that surround the Svayambhūcaitya, viz. Vasupura (with earth), Vāyupura (with wind), Agnipura (with fire), Nāgapura (with water) and Śāntipura (with space, *ākāśa*).[31] With the exception of Śāntipura, they are power places for the propitiation of their respective element. Vāyupura, for instance, is—by the sacrifice of a buffalo—propitiated ahead of the annual procession (*yātrā*) of Buṅgadyaḥ, the deity commonly identified as Karuṇāmaya or Rāto Matsyendranātha, in order to protect its tall chariot from storm. Likewise, in case of drought brought by failing monsoons, Nāgapura is propitiated so that the Nāgas, the primordial mythical snakes who control the waters, may release the rains. In their present form, these rites of propitiation—including the animal sacrifice—are embedded in a Buddhist ritual framework and are performed by Buddhist priests. All the same, they connect to a substratum of religious beliefs and practice that is not specifically Buddhist, but also underlies Hinduism in its various manifestations. Thus the Nāgas are equally worshipped by Hindu Newars. Similarly, Vasundharā, the goddess worshipped at Vasupura, the shrine of the earth element, has, despite her Buddhist identity, the underlying characteristic of the earth goddess of fertility. This earth goddess

[31] This identification of the five shrines with the elements is, for instance, attested in the long version of the *Svayambhupurāṇa* (p. 424,16–19 of Shastri's edition).

is of greatest antiquity in Indic religion and manifests herself in various forms and guises in practically all forms of pre-Islamic Indian religions. Moreover, the physical make-up of the shrines suggests—notably in the case of Agnipura (apparently a protruding rock) and Vāyupura (a stone formation with a cleft through which the wind supposedly blows and thus manifests itself)—that these cults connect to a truly autochthonous layer of religiosity.

The case of Śāntipura is more complex. This is the most sacred and secret of all of the esoteric shrines (*āgaṃ*) of Newar Buddhism. It is dedicated to Saṃvara (or Mahāsaṃvara)[32] and said to cover the entrance to a network of underground caves, that, according to popular conception, connects to the hidden core of the Svayambhūcaitya. The inner precincts of this shrine are closed to all but the eldest (*thakāli*) of the community of guardians residing atop Svayambhū, and the responsible *vajrācārya* priest, who traditionally comes from a particular lineage from Makhan Bāhāl, one of the chief monasteries of Kathmandu. These two meet here once a month as *yajamāna* and *purohita* for the secret worship of Saṃvara (or Mahāsaṃvara). As mentioned, Śāntipura is also identified with the element space (*ākāśa*) (and hence may also be called Ākāśapur). This association with *ākāśa* makes sense insofar as Saṃvara—the same holds good for his ectypes—is a manifestation of Akṣobhya who is equated with the element *ākāśa*. It links Śāntipura with the four other *pura*s dedicated to earth, wind, fire and water, and, by extension, with an autochthonous layer of religion. Such a link also finds its expression in the common lore that the caves of Śāntipura house demonic beings of all sorts, as well as the famed *nāgamaṇḍala* that was drawn with the blood of the Nine Nāgas and is regarded a powerful ritual tool to effect rain. Thus Śāntipura is not only the shrine for the most important tantric cult, but also a power place in its own right. Here the meeting and amalgamation of the tantric dimension of Buddhism with elements of autochthonous religiosity is particularly striking.

[32]The middle-length version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* (ch. 7, 158) identifies the deity as "Saṃvara of great might" (*mahāśrīmatsaṃvara*) and the long version (Shastri 424,16) as "the great hero, Saṃvara, the Lord of the world" (*mahāvīraḥ sambaro jagadīśvaraḥ*). I am not sure whether these qualifications of Saṃvara imply that the deity is meant to be Mahāsaṃvara rather than Saṃvara (or Cakrasaṃvara), but the Newar tradition generally understands the deity to be indeed Mahāsaṃvara (see, for instance, Naresh Man Bajracharya's paper "Buddhism in Nepal and Nepal Mandala" which was presented at the "Conference on the Buddhist Heritage of Nepal Mandal" in November 1998 in Kathmandu and is available online at `http://www.lrcnepal.org/Resources.html`). Either way, the principal deity of Śāntipur is the highest male embodiment of buddhahood in the given Yoginītantra tradition.

Of course, it is precarious to deduce from the presence of the mentioned autochthonous shrines at Seṃgu that this was a sacred site even before the advent of Buddhism. The *Svayambhūpurāṇa* reports that the five shrines associated with the elements were set up by Śāntiśrī upon completion of the Svayambhūcaitya itself. At least in their present constellation, they certainly do not predate the advent of Buddhism. Many of the other mentioned sacred rocks, stones, openings, etc., at Seṃgu may also have been "discovered" only after the hillock had already become a holy Buddhist site. On the other hand, even if these sacred places are not of great antiquity (and to my mind some of them may well be), their presence and prominence demonstrate that Seṃgu has not become a purely Buddhist site (and presumably never was) but continues to accommodate autochthonous forms of religiosity as well.

Such a perspective opens up the possibility to look more generally at the introduction of Buddhism not as the one-directional, uncontested imposition of a dominant religious force, but as a constantly renegotiated process in which Buddhism is continually challenged and forced to compromise. The Svayambhūcaitya is unmistakably a Buddhist shrine that houses the *pañcabuddha*s (hence the designations *jinālaya* and *pañcatathāgatāśraya* in the Svayambhūpurāṇa [see below]), who in their totality stand for the principle of buddhahood and enlightenment.[33] By building the *caitya* over the pre-existing autochthonous deity, Buddhism imposed itself upon the site. On the other hand, according to the narrative of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, the *caitya* was immediately surrounded by shrines of the natural elements and thereby embedded in a religious context in which the propitiation of the natural forces were predominant concerns. From this perspective the hillock of Svayambhū continued to function as a sacred site in ways it presumably did before. The advent of Buddhism did not transform it into a site dedicated exclusively to the practice of Buddhism and the pursuit of enlightenment. Rather, Buddhism was incorporated into a pre-existing, autochthonous sacred site geared to the manipulation of such forces that govern life so as to avert misfortune and assure prosperity and good luck. On the other hand, the main *caitya* and the many other caityas, Buddha and Bodhisattva images as well as monasteries spread across the hillock are distinctly Buddhist,[34] and have had a deep impact on the place and the re-

[33]Note that the Svayambhūcaitya predates Vajrayāna Buddhism and hence also its conception as a shrine of the *pañcabuddha*s. Besides the panels at the drum of the base executed in Licchavi style (they are partly visible below the niches in the cardinal directions), we have no clear indication of the *caitya*'s shape and configuration in its pre-Vajrayāna phase. But there can be no doubt that then, too, it was an unequivocally Buddhist shrine.

[34]There are other major caityas at Svayambhū in addition to the main *caitya*, no-

ligious activities there. But this impact has to be viewed in terms of an ongoing process of give and take in which Buddhism and autochthonous forms become more and more intertwined. I am far from suggesting that this interpretation of what happened and continues to happen at Svayambhū is particularly sensational. By contrast, I expect that my findings agree with the situation at other places supposedly taken over by Buddhism, and I would argue that this is in more general accord with the basic pattern in which Buddhism tends to be adapted to new local and religious contexts. Moreover, the same kind of mechanisms and dynamics as identified here for Svayambhū were also at play when Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and other Hindu traditions were introduced elsewhere to the Nepal Valley.[35]

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In the second part of this paper I will turn to the so-called Svayambhūpurāṇa. I first will examine its mythical account of the beginnings of Svayambhū and relate it to my above argument. Then I will move beyond Svayambhū in order to consider how the Svayambhūpurāṇa renders the Valley at large a sacred place. In the process I will come to deal with the tantric goddess Khagānanā and the concomitant esoteric tradition that situates Nepal within the larger sacred landscape of India, and show how this tradition was localised in Nepal.

The Svayambhūpurāṇa exists in different versions and recensions that have grown over considerable time to assume their final shape.[36] Leaving aside the latest and most evolved version (which is in twelve chapters) and excepting likewise later renditions in the Newari language, we can differentiate three principal versions of the text, namely a short one in eight chapters (there are both the original text in prose and a versified adaptation of it, which is of remarkably poor quality), a middle-length version in

tably the Pulāṃ Seṃgu *caitya*, the *caitya* of the shrine of Mañjuśrī and the so-called Vasubandhu-caitya. In addition some hundred (if not more) votive caityas are distributed across the hillock. Likewise, many free-standing Buddha and Bodhisattva statues of stone cover the site. Furthermore, in addition to the traditional Newar monastic institutions in direct vicinity of the main *caitya*, Svayambhū has in the course of the last two hundred years attracted a number of Tibetan monasteries and, in the 1950s, a Theravāda *vihāra*.

[35]For a particularly pertinent example see Axel Michaels' study of the Pāśupatināth complex *Die Reisen der Götter: der nepalische Paśupatinātha-Tempel und sein rituelles Umfeld*, Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1994.

[36]For a brief study of the various versions and recensions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* see Horst Brinkhaus, "The Textual History of the Different Versions of the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa" (in G. Toffin, ed., *Nepal: Past and Present*, Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1993, pp. 63–71).

ten chapters, and a long version in eight chapters.[37] The short version in prose is the oldest form in which this text is extant. There are two separate and at points deviating Tibetan translations of this version that are extant, one by the Eighth Situ, the celebrate Sanskrit savant Situ paṇchen chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774)[38] and one prepared jointly by the otherwise unknown Blo bo lo tshā ba Chos kyi rgyal mtshan from Mustang and a certain ācārya called Jinendra (or *Jineśvara) (rgyal ba'i dbang po) from Nepal. The middle-length version has recently been published with Newari translation by Min Bahadur Shakya and Shanta Harsha Bajracharya (Lalitpur: Nagarjuna Institute of Exact Methods, 2001) on the basis of a transcript

[37]The same differentiation of three versions was already made in the Tibetan tradition in the eighteenth century. Chos kyi ni ma, the Fourth Khams sprul rin po che (1730–1779/80) and student of Si tu Paṇ chen Chos-kyi 'byung gnas, the eighth Tai Si tu (1700–1774), who translated the prose recension of the short version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* into Tibetan, wrote in his guide to the sacred places of Nepal (*Yul chen nya ba'i tshandoha bal po'i gnas kyi dkar chag Gamgs can rna ba'i bdud trsi*): "Generally speaking, of this [Buddhist Purāṇa] there exist three recensions: an extensive one, a short (or condensed) one and a medium-length version" (quoted according to Hubert Decleer, "Si tu Paṇ chen's translation of the Svayambhū Purāṇa and his role in the development of the Kathmandu Valley pilgrimage guide (*gnas yig*) literature," in *Lungta* 13 (2000), 33–64: pp. 33f).

[38]The translation has been published as part of Situ paṇchen chos kyi 'byung gnas' Collected Works (*gsung 'bum*; vol. 7, pp. 229–257) in 1990 by Palpung Sungrab Nyamso Khang in Sansal, Himachal Pradeesh. This publication has been scanned by the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (volume 4149, work number 26630). For details of the translation see Peter Verhagen's forthcoming paper "Notes apropos the Oeuvre of Si-tu Paṇ-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas: 1) Belles-Lettres in his Opera Minora".

Situ paṇchen notes in his autobiography written in 1723, presumably while staying in Nepal, that there was an earlier Tibetan translation of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* by a certain 'translator' Bshes gnyen rnam rgyal, whom Peter Verhagen (*ibid.*) identifies as "Lha-mthong-lo-tsā-ba Bshes-gnyen-rnam-rgyal of unknown precise date, who is also mentioned in the historiography of the fifth Dalai Lama." I am not aware that any traces of this translation would survive, but surmise that it did not meet the high standards of Situ paṇchen, who prepared his own translation in 1748, when again visiting Nepal. He did so on the behest of his close friend, the Tibetan rNying-ma-pa lama Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698–1755) with whom he was then sojourning in Kathmandu. As a Newar chronicle records (cf. von Rospatt 2001, pp. 222), the two lamas went together to Svayambhū for *darśan* and saw that the *harmikā* above the dome had collapsed. Having learned that the *caitya* had been for some time in this state of disrepair, they went to see the king Jayaprakāśa Malla and urged that Svayambhū be renovated. As Peter Verhagen remarks (*ibid.*), these details suggest that Situ Paṇchen's interest in the Svayambhūrāna and its translation has to be seen in the context of his and Kaḥ-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu's engagement for the renovation of the *caitya*, work on which started three years later under the guidance of Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu, and was completed in 1758 under the supervision of the dKar-brgyud lama 'Phrin-las shing-rta (1718-1766), who had assumed charge after the former's death (cf. von Rospatt 2001, pp. 221-228).

(and not of a facsimile edition as stated in the Introduction) that was prepared by Guruśekhara Śarmā in cooperation with Kamal Prakash Malla from a single, but good manuscript, on which more below. The long version was already published more than a hundred years ago by Hariprasad Shastri under the title *The Vṛihat Svayambhū Purāṇam* (Calcutta: 1894–1900). The core of the narrative material has also been incorporated, in modified form, into the so-called "Later Chronicles" of Nepalese history (*Bhāṣāvaṃśāvalī* or *Nepālavaṃśāvalī*) that were compiled and authored around the beginning of the nineteenth century.[39] In roughly the same version as found in these chronicles, the stories from the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* continue to be alive in oral lore and—at least until recently—in folk songs.[40] Since there are no reliable published Sanskrit editions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, let alone translations into languages other than Tibetan and Newari,[41] outside observers usually only know its narrative material indirectly from these chronicles. However, the chronicles' version of events often differs considerably from that found in the original versions. Usually, it is much abridged and simplified (at times to the point of distortion). Occasionally, it also reflects a more advanced stage in the evolution of the narrative. In this paper, I prefer to study the principal versions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* itself, rather than such later retelling. For this I use the mentioned short version in its prose recension, and the middle-length and

[39]Most important for the present purposes are the so-called Wright-Chronicle (Daniel Wright, ed., *History of Nepal, Translated from Parbatiya by Munshi Shew Shunker Singh and Pandit Sri Guruanand, with an Introductory Sketch of the Country and People of Nepal by the Editor*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1877) and the Padmagiri Chronicle translated by Bikram Jit Hasrat (*History of Nepal as Told by its Own and Contemporary Chroniclers*, Hoshiarpur (Punjab): V.V. Research Institute Book Agency, 1970).

[40]See the songs 6, 12 and 13 in Siegfried Lienhard's *Nevārīgītimañjarī: Religious and Secular Poetry of the Nevars of the Kathmandu Valley*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Eiksell International, 1974.

[41]However, Horst Brinkhaus has done extensive work on a critical edition of both the prose and verse recension of the short version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, and his edition will hopefully be published in the near future. Moreover, Hubert Decleer is currently preparing a study of the two Tibetan translations of the short prose version that will include a translation, and I myself have begun work on a new edition and translation of the middle-length version. Furthermore, there is a French translation by Louis de la ValléePoussin of the tenth chapter of the longest (and youngest) version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* in twelve chapters (Gand: H. Engelcke, 1893). In addition, a partial Japanese translation of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* by M. Ujiie was published in the journal *Koyasan Daigaku Ronso* (vol. 11, 1976, pp. 1–39). I did not have access to this translation, but gather that it renders the first three chapters of the long version published by Shastri. Finally, there is also a recent Nepalese translation (Kathmandu, 2005) of the modern Newari version prepared by Badrīratna Bajrācārya (Kathmandu, 1983).

long versions.[42]

Essentially, the various versions and recensions of the Svayambhūpurāṇa consist of a cluster of legends that relate to Svayambhū and also register the numerous other sacred places in the Nepal Valley and thus establish its sacred topography. They are woven into a (more or less coherent) account by the narrative device of embedding them in discourses delivered by Buddha Śākyamuni to the future Buddha Maitreya. These discourses are structured temporally by identifying the related events with the eras of particular prehistorical Buddhas, commencing with Vipaśvin (the name used generally for Vipaśyin in the different versions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, and hence adopted in this essay), continuing with Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda and Kanakamuni, and ending with Kāśyapa. In

[42] There are variants of these three recensions, and of the middle-length recension there is also a rendition in Newari. However, time constraints made it unfeasible to prepare critical editions of the passages I here adduce. For the short, as yet unpublished version, I consulted a number of manuscripts, but as a rule quote from a manuscript dated *nepāl saṃvat* 879 (1758/9 CE) kept in the Kesar Library in Kathmandu and microfilmed by the NGMPP (C 27/7), which I found particularly reliable. Before going to press, I was able to check my readings against those of the draft version of Prof. Brinkhaus' critical edition, which then had become available to me thanks to his gracious generosity. As for the middle-length version, I have used the *devanagarī* transcript of the aforementioned manuscript prepared by Śarmā and Malla. (The aforementioned published version of this transcript by Shakya and Bajracharya adds mistakes of its own to the ones found already in the copied transcript, which are taken over without rectification.) In addition, I have consulted the manuscript itself, which is kept in the National Archives in Kathmandu and was microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (reel number A 923/3). The text reproduced here renders this manuscript (with some emendations which are marked as such) with the numeration of verses that, while absent in the manuscript itself, is found identically in the transcript and the printed edition. For the long recension I have used the edition by Hariprasad Shastri (to which again all according quotes in this paper refer). The reproduced text is in such faulty Sanskrit that Sylvain Lévi (Le Népal, Étude Historique d'un Royaume Hindou, Paris: Ernest Leroux, Éditeur, vol. 1, p. 212, n. 1) suggested that Shastri deliberately choose the poorest reading out of spite for Buddhism, while Bernhard Kölver (1986, p. 135) wonders whether Shastri himself actually ever saw the text (rather than just lending his name). This criticism seems a little harsh, given the formidable challenges that the edition of this text poses. Unlike the earlier short and middle-length recensions, this long recension was clearly not composed in grammatically correct standard Sanskrit. Rather, the text abounds with linguistic peculiarities, or "mistakes" if you will, that reflect the structure and syntax of Newari, clearly the mother tongue of the author(s). (For a linguistic treatment of these features see Bernhard Kölver, "Actives into Ergatives, or, Newārī into Sanskrit," *Studia Tibetica et Mongolica (Festschrift Manfred Taube)*, ed. by Helmut Eimer et al., Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1999: pp. 189–206.) Despite the philological imperfections of Shastri's edition, the text is intelligible as it is, though a principled re-edition remains an important desideratum. In the present paper, I have not attempted to constitute a better text and reproduce, with some exceptions, the text as published by Shastri.

all but the short version, this structural principle is taken further, and the episodes related by Śākyamuni are not only identified with the era of one of the six past Buddhas. Rather, in these expanded versions many of the related details are reported by Śākyamuni as teachings that he had heard from those very Buddhas whe he attended upon them as a bodhisattva. Moreover, these past Buddhas do not only eulogize Svayambhū and other sacred places and divinities of the Valley, but in some cases also attest to their sanctity by themselves visiting the Valley with their followers. For the Buddha Krakucchanda such a link can already be found in the short version. He stays at the northern edge of the Valley where he first delivers a sermon and then ordains a large group of brahmans and of *kṣatrīya*s. The additional narrative frame with past Buddhas and their incorporation into the narrative adds further weight to the events related by Śakyamuni. In addition to the present Buddha, who is the pricipal narrator of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, and the future Buddha Maitreya, who is the principal interlocutor, also the past Buddhas come to confirm the sacredness of Svayambhū and the authenticity of the myths relating to its origins and history. In this way the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* finds the endorsement of the Buddhas of all three times.

Again in all but the short version, the discourses delivered by Śākyamuni Buddha are, together with their embedded teachings of the past Buddhas, themselves enclosed in two further, outer narrative frames. That is, the discourses are related by the preceptor Upagupta to Aśoka, and—in a further frame—by the teacher Jayaśrī to Jineśvarī (sic). The frame with Upagupta and Aśoka is a standard narrative device of the Sanskrit *avadāna* literature. The additional frame with Jayaśrī teaching Jineśvarī (who in related works features with the name Jinaśrī or Jinamuni) is characteristic of the anonymous narrative literature emerging in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in Nepal (see below).[43] These two frames serve to bridge the distance between Śakyamuni and his entourage, and the audience at whom the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* is addressed.

The identification of the Svayambhū-purāṇa as a *purāṇa* only occurs in later versions and recensions, and I refer to the text in this way largely out of convenience, in order to comply with common contemporary parlance, both within the tradition and among outside scholars. Indeed, the text is only a *purāṇa* in the weak sense of a *sthalapurāṇa*, that is, a narrative accounting in legendary terms for the sacredness of a par-

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[43]See Joel Tatelman, *The Glorious Deeds of Pūrṇa, A Translation and Study of the Pūrṇāvadāna*, Richmond: Curzon, 2000, pp. 159f., and Will Tuladhar-Douglas, *Remaking Buddhism for Medieval Nepal, The fifteenth-century reformation of Newar Buddhism.* London etc.: Routledge, 2006, pp. 45f.

ticular place in a manner similar to that of a *māhātmya*. The late version in twelve chapters analysed by Lévi (pp. 208f) even refers to itself explicitly as *nepālamāhātmya*, hence Lévi's characterization of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* as a "Nepāla-māhātmya à l'usage des bouddhist" (ibid., p. 210). The colophons of the short and middle-length version give as the title *Svayaṃbhūcaityabhaṭṭāraka-uddeśa* ("Account of the venerable Svayambhūcaitya"). Particularly intriguing is the case of the short and oldest version which misses both mentioned narrative frames, so that the text assumes essentially the form of a *sūtra* consisting of the discourses given by the Buddha in response to questions posed by Maitreya. However, these discourses are preceded by an invocation and a brief summary of the subsequent account of the Svayambhū hillock and of the Svayambhū caitya and its mythical origins. These elements are not integrated into the main narrative, thus coming across as introductory and separate from the *buddhavacana* portion that forms the main part of the original text. Moreover, in all consulted manuscripts of the short version (including the two Tibetan translations), but the mentioned palm-leaf manuscript, the text is identified at the end (upon conclusion of the narrative and before the phrase pronouncing the end of the eighth chapter and the subsequent scribal colophon) as a treatise (*śāstra*) that was "made" (*kṛtvā*) by an unidentified first person speaker.[44] What is more, the colophon of Blo bo lo tshā ba's translation identifies a certain Mahāpaṇḍita Ācārya Śrī Jayacandra as the author.[45] Hence, despite the formal similarity, the text is clearly not cast as an authentic *sūtra*. It would seem that the tradition felt it no longer possible to generate entirely new *sūtra*s. (Compare the alternative strategy successfully employed by the creators of the roughly contemporaneous Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha, namely to formulate their work as a recast of an esteemed *mahāyānasūtra*, viz. the Kāraṇḍavyūha.)[46] In later reworkings of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* the mentioned outer double narrative frame (which may not have been available to the original author of the text) was employed in order to validate the text as an authentic Buddhist work, albeit below the more prestigious threshold of a *sūtra*. This was

[44]Short version, fol. 38b2: *caityasyoddeśaśāstratvaṃ kṛtvā yat sukṛtaṃ mayā* | *avāpta[s] tena loko 'stu śrīmaṃjuśrīsamaḥ sadā* || (or | *avāpataḥ sarvaloko 'stu* ... : according to a different transmission).

[45]I am grateful to Hubert Decleer, who drew my attention to this attribution of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* to Jayacandra and, with his unfailing generosity, provided me with his draft edition of Blo bo lo tshā ba's translation.

[46]See Will Tuladhar-Douglas 2006, and his paper *Literary Sources of the Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha* presented at the "Conference on the Buddhist Heritage of Nepal Mandal" held in November 1998 in Kathmandu, and available online at `http://www.lrcnepal.org/Resources.html`.

not awkward because other works in that category of anonymous Buddhist Sanskrit narrative literature also include the "word of the Buddha" (*buddhavacana*), and the Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha, too, employs this double narrative frame.

The precise dating of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* has not been settled. The sole surviving palm-leaf and physically oldest manuscript known to me (NGMPP reel number E 1134/2) does, according to the learned opinion of Diwakar Acharya, an eminent expert of Nepalese palaeography, date from the first half of the sixteenth century.[47] Mistakes in this manuscript leave no doubt that it was copied from one or several earlier exemplars, so that the text itself must have originated earlier. While the palm-leaf manuscript is of the short prose version, there is another manuscript of interest, namely the aforementioned exemplar of the middle-length version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* transcribed by Śarma and Malla and published by Shakya and Bajracharya (NGMPP reel number A 923/4). The manuscript itself is dated to 1814 (*nepāl samvat* 934) (folio 55v7), but it includes the faithful copy of the colophon of the original manuscript, which is dated to the middle of the sixteenth century, more precisely to 1558 (*nepāl samvat* 678).[48] Even though only surviving in form of a later copy, this colophon shows that by the middle of the sixteenth century there was in addition to the original prose text of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* already a much extended and versified version, namely the middle-length one, that reflects a well-advanced stage in the evolution of the narrative. In this light it seems unlikely that the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* could have originated later than the fifteenth century. Though there is no hard evidence, I find it, moreover, likely that the text (but not all of its narrative elements, some of which are likely to be much earlier) originated only subsequent to the unification of the Nepal Valley by Jayasthitimalla (ruled 1382 to 1395). The concomitant initiation of political stability from the end of the fourteenth century onwards came after a long period of endless political turmoil, strife and fragmentation and favored a climate of cultural and religious revival that translated into an apparent increase in literary and other activities. For instance, after little evidence survived from the immediately preceding centuries, from this period onward there is a considerable number of in-

[47]In a personal communication from June 07 Diwakar Acharya writes that the palm-leaf manuscript (E 1134/2) "should be placed between 630–680 [*nepāl samvat*]. ... Letters and lines are not written in equal proportion which generally happens in earlier times. The size of the letters is also not uniform and fitting to earlier times. ... You can find one string hole in very much the exact position in mss from a later date," and hence the single hole is no reason to assume an earlier date.

[48]The cipher "6" (55v5), which is not entirely clear, is confirmed by the date given in words (*nāga muni rasa*) in the customary inverse order (55v4).

scriptions attesting to the establishment of new and the restoration of old temple structures. Similarly, the oldest surviving Nepalese scroll paintings (*paubhāḥ*) date from this era and attest to the emergence of new forms of religious practices, such as the life cycle rituals for elders (*jyā jaṃko*) celebrated even now by Newars.[49] More pertinent in our context, this was also a time of increased literary activity that gave rise to a new corpus of anonymous Buddhist narrative literature composed in Sanskrit. This little-studied literature encompasses heroic tales (*avadāna*), accounts narrated on the occasion of particular observances (*vratakathā*), a reworked Mahāyānasūtra and accounts such as the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* that render the legendary history of particular sacred places. Much of this literature is driven by the agenda to strengthen Buddhism, presumably at least in part in response to the thriving of the Śaiva and Śākta traditions patronized by the Malla kings. Whereas the Hindu traditions were invigorated by an influx of Maithili brahmins who reached the Valley in the wake of Jayasthitimalla's ascension to power (he was supposedly an outsider to the Valley, possibly hailing himself from the Mithila region; cf. Luciano Petech: *Mediaeval History of Nepal.* Rome: ISMEO, 1984: pp. 128f.), the Buddhists of the Valley were left to their own devices and forced to redefine, and to a point even reinvent, their tradition independently of the lost Indian motherland. Besides reworking older material (such as narratives from the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya or the Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra), they composed new works that compensated for this loss by centering Buddhism in Nepal. Foremost among works with such an orientation is the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* with its agenda to center Buddhism in the Nepal Valley. Though removed by more than a millennium from the advent of Buddhism at Svayambhū, the text addresses, in its attempt to recreate the sacred landscape of Nepal in Buddhist terms, the same topic as I have done above, namely the Buddhist origins of Svayambhū and of the Nepal Valley at large. It provides an alternate, mythical account that connects in intriguing ways to my own hypothesis of the autochtonous origins of Svayambhū and the introduction of Buddhism. Though of little relevance for the historian looking for "hard facts," this account is of great interest because the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s tradition continues to be alive in oral lore. Thus the Purāṇa even now shapes the religious consciousness of Newars and informs their understanding of

[49] For details of these old age rites see my forthcoming paper "Affirming Life and Negotiating Death, A Fresh Appraisal of Life-Cycle Rituals of Old Age among the Newars," which is a substantially revised and expanded version of my article "Der nahende Tod, Altersrituale bei den Newars," published in *Der Abschied von den Toten, Trauerrituale im Kulturvergleich* (edited by Jan Assmann et al., Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005, pp. 199–222).

the history of Buddhism in Nepal and their place within it. (This historical awareness also explains why the redactors of the nineteenth-century chronicles of Nepalese history drew on so much material from the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*.) Indeed, in order to understand the Newar tradition on its own terms, this text is particularly important and deserves more scholarly attention than it has received so far. Because of this importance of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, I will deal with it in the following as a lens through which to look at the sacred origins of Svayambhū and Nepal with the eyes of the tradition.

* * *

Here, then, is a brief summary of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s account of the origins of Svayambhū and the Valley.[50]

In pre-historic times Nepal was a lake (a claim that accords largely with geological findings), attracting many great saints. Upon the blossom of a beautiful lotus flower (which according to later tradition had sprouted

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[50] I follow the aforementioned middle-length version (ch. 2, verses 22cd–29a). The reading enclosed by curly braces {. . .} is to be deleted (e.g. *ca{r}tur*: instead of the manuscript's reading *cartur* read *catur*). The portion enclosed by angle brackets <. . .> has been added to the text found in the manuscript. The text enclosed by square brackets [. . .] has been emended; the original reading of the manuscript is only reproduced here where it differs significantly from the conjectured reading proposed by me.

> *tasminn eva sare* [sic] *tatra puṇyaja[l]āśraye hrade* ‖ *22* ‖ (note that the b-pada is metrically defective.)
>
> *maṇiṇālaṃ mahaddīptihīrakeśaram uttamaṃ* |
> *pañcaratnamayaṃ d[i]vyasarojarā[g]akarṇṇikaṃ* ‖ *23* ‖
> *prādu<r>bhūtaṃ mahāpadmaṃ sahasradalakāśitaṃ* |
> *tasya ratnasarojasya karṇṇikāmadhyamaṇḍale* ‖ *24* ‖
> *svayam abhūt samutpanno dharmmadhātur jinālayaḥ* |
> *ekahastapramāṇāṃśuḥ śubhraratnamayojjvalaḥ* ‖ *25* ‖
> *sambodhiśrīguṇādhāraḥ sarvalakṣaṇamaṇḍitaḥ* |
> *jyot[ī]rūpo jagajj<y>eṣṭha<ḥ>paṃcatathāgatāśrayaḥ* ‖ *26* ‖
> *jagadīśo jagadvandyo jagatpūjyo jagatprabhuḥ* |
> *anādinidhano 'jīrṇṇo mānyaḥ sarvaśubhārthabhṛt* ‖ *27* ‖
> *samantabhadrarūpo 'graḥ śreṣṭhaḥ saddharmaratnabhṛt* |
> *trailokyasadguṇādhīśaś caturvarggaphalapradaḥ* ‖ *28* ‖
> *tasmiṃś caii{r}tye samutpanne* . . .

Compare the corresponding passage in the shorter (and older) version, fol. 4v5–5r4: *tasmiṃś ca śakaṭacakrapramāṇaṃ sahasradalaṃ vilasanmaṇinālakaṃ sahīrakesara¡ṃ¿ jvalatsarojarā[g]akarṇṇikaṃ pañcaratnamayaṃ mahāpadmaṃ prādurbhūtam. tasya karṇikāyāṃ yo 'sau dharmadhātuḥ sphaṭikamayaḥ sarvalakṣaṇasaṃpūrṇṇo śreṣṭho vandanīyaḥ pūjanīyo manorathādhikaphalaprado* (or according to another reading: *manovāñchitaphalado*) *devāsuramanuṣyāṇāṃ hitāya sukhāya mokṣāya ca svayam utpannaḥ.*

from a seed that the past Buddha Vipaśvin had cast into the lake when he came there on pilgrimage), a *dharmadhātu*, that is a *caitya*,[51] consisting of crystal (*sphaṭikamaya*) and having the form of light (*jyotīrūpa*), arose of its own accord (*svayam abhūt samutpannaḥ*). It is qualified as the home of the Jinas (*jinālaya*), as the ontological basis of the five Tathāgatas (*pañcatathāgatāśraya*), as the support for the sacred qualities of enlightenment (*sambodhiśrīguṇādhāraḥ*), as adorned with all the marks (of buddhahood) (*sarvalakṣaṇamaṇḍitaḥ*), as bearing all beautiful objects (*sarvaśubhārthabhṛt*) and as bearing the jewels of the true doctrine (*saddharmaratnabhṛt*). These qualifications conform with what the Vajrayāna *caitya* is according to Newar ritual practice, namely a shrine housing the five transcendental Buddhas who each embody particular qualities which collectively constitute buddhahood. Fittingly, the light emanating from Svayambhū came to be seen as consisting of five rays, white, blue, yellow, red and green in color, in accordance with the colors of the *pañcabuddha*s (see plate 8).

At a later age, Mañjuśrī, attracted by the rays of Svayambhū that he had seen in meditation at his abode in China, came to Nepal for *darśan* in the form of the *vajrācārya* Mañjudeva. Enchanted by the sight, he drained the lake covering Nepal so that people might settle there for worshipping Svayambhū. At a much later age, a certain Pracaṇḍadeva abdicated his throne as king of Gauḍa, an eastern state of the Indian subcontinent, in order to devote the remainder of his life to the pursuit of religion. After his arrival at Kathmandu he was consecrated as Buddhist tantric master (*vajrācārya*) with the name Śāntiśrī (or Śāntikara according to the long version). Concerned about the pollution of Svayambhū by dirt and anticipating the *kaliyuga* when people are prone to become wicked, he decided to encase the radiating crystalline *caitya* in a solid structure, the forerunner of the present *caitya*, in order to protect it from pollution and from potential abuse and theft in the future. He did so in two steps. First he covered this self-arisen *caitya* with a rock (*śilā*), and then he built a *caitya* out of bricks above this.[52]

[51] In the passage under discussion, the self-arisen *dharmadhātu* is clearly understood to be a *caitya*, since it is referred to as such in the next sentence (*tasmiṃś caitye samutpanne*). This usage of the term *dharmadhātu* is also attested in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (see p. 90 of Mireille Bénisti, "Étude sur le Stūpa dans l'Inde Ancienne," *BÉFEO* 50,1 (1960), pp. 37–116). For further references of this usage of *dharmadhātu* see p. 465 of Heino Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des buddhistischen Heilsweges*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992.

[52] This is narrated as follows in the middle-length version:

> Chap. 1, 66–67:
> *idānīṃ tu kalau lokā duṣṭāī krurāśayāḥ śaṭhāḥ |*
> *dṛṣṭvedaṃ dharmadhātuṃ hi hariṣyanti na saṃśayaḥ ||66||*

For the Newars this is not a legendary myth of a primordial past, but a factual account of events that play out in the present. They find this confirmed by the (rare) eye witness accounts of the pious who also now occasionally see the rays of Svayambhū emitted miraculously from the core of the *caitya*. Moreover, this myth is kept alive by being commemorated biannually in ritual practice. On *lhutipunhi*, the full moon day that usually falls in April, large number of Buddhists climb the mountain Jāmāḥcva on the edge of the Valley to honour and mark that from here on that day the past Buddha Vipaśvin cast the seed of the lotus flower into the lake upon which later the crystalline *dharmadhātu* came to manifest itself.[53] And the full moon day six months later (*katiṃpunhi*) is identified as the anniversary of this manifestation upon the lotus. Hence on this day anniversary rituals (*busadhaṃ*) of renewal are performed for the Svayambhūcaitya, and in principle also for all other *caitya*s because on this occasion they are equated with Svayambhū so that their "birthday" coincides. Fittingly, for the Svayambhūcaitya this day also serves as occasion for such acts of renovation as the annual repainting of the eyes on the cube (*harmikā*) above the dome.

The starting point for the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s author was presumably the encased, self-originated rock and the name *svayambhū* which, as mentioned above, predates the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* by several centuries.[54] In

ity asau śilayācchādya guptīkṛt[v]āprakāśitaḥ |
taduparīṣṭikābhiś ca vidhāya caityam uttamaṃ ‖67‖
Chap. 7, 151–152:
yad atrāpy aparādhaṃ me tat sarvaṃ kṣantum arhati |
iti saṃprārthya sa prājña jyotīrūpaṃ jinālayaṃ ‖151‖
sa ratnapadmam ācchādya śilayā samagopayat |
taduparīṣṭikābhiś ca vidhāya caityam ucchritaṃ ‖152‖ (note that the *pada taduparīṣṭikābhiś ca* employed in verses 67 and 152 is metrically flawed.)

[53]See Wright, p. 77.

[54]Between the fourteenth and nineteenth century the Svayambhūcaitya was completely renewed at least twelve times, a topic I have studied in detail in my forthcoming book *The Periodic Renovations of the Thrice Blessed Svayambhūcaitya of Kathmandu* (see also my essay "A Historical Overview of the Renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya," published in the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 12 (2001): 195–241). These renovations were major affairs. Rather then merely fixing what was marred, the *caitya* was, in accordance with the treatises on this subject (*jīrṇoddhāravidhi*), dismantled down to the dome and then rebuilt with new materials. Even though the dome is not levelled in the process, it has to be partly dismantled in order to allow for the replacement of the massive central wooden pole (*yaṣṭi*) that traverses the entire structure from bottom to top. The precise details of the base of the *yaṣṭi* inside the dome are not clear, but it is likely that the *yaṣṭi* rests upon a structure that connects it with the rock. I hence presume that the frequent renovations, as well as oral tradition kept the knowledge of the rock encased inside the *Svayambhūcaitya* alive. Note that it is depicted on the men-

accordance with my above hypothesis, the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* understands the *caitya* to be a man-made structure erected above a pre-existing sacred object that had come into being of its own accord in a primordial past. Hence the designation *svayambhū* refers primarily to the enshrined object and only by extension to the encasing *caitya*. However, according to the Purāṇa the encased rock is not the self-originated object, but only a cover put in place by Śāntiśrī to conceal the self-originated *dharmadhātu* below. It is at this point that the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* begins to narrate myths that rework the autochthonous origins of the shrine in Buddhist terms. Rather than viewing the rock itself as self-originated and sacred, it conjures up the classical image of the manifestation of buddhahood upon a lotus blossom as taken up, for instance, in the lotus motif ornamenting the Buddha's throne (*āsan*). In this way the autochthonous rock is demoted to a primary cover, and the self-originated and sacred object becomes the spontaneously arisen *dharmadhātu* that supposedly lies hidden below the rock.

This myth places Svayambhū in a prehistorical past, populated by Buddhas of previous world ages starting with the mentioned Vipaśvin. Thus, the self-arisen *caitya* takes chronological precedence over the historical Buddha and lessens his significance. Despite Śākyamuni's prominent function as narrator in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, his role in the text is reduced to attest to the sacredness and grandeur of Svayambhū and its environs, both by his praises and by his actual visit with his followers. Similarly, the prehistorical Buddhas and other great historical and mythical Buddhist figures feature in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* not so much as agents in their own rights (the one notable exception is Mañjuśrī),[55] but as mere pilgrims who come to Svayambhū for *darśana* and worship, thereby affirming its centrality. This treatment makes perfect buddhological sense insofar as Svayambhū is equated by the Purāṇa with the Buddha principle itself and—as born out by qualifications such as being without beginning or end (*anādinidhana*) and free of aging (*ajīrṇa*) (cf. n. 50)—elevated above the level of anthropomorphic embodiment of buddhahood (*nirmāṇakāya*) that Śākyamuni and the other mentioned Buddhas represent. The approach of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* reflects the world view of tantric Buddhism in which the historical Buddha and the setting within which he had operated had lost much of their importance. But the Svayambhū myth also refrains from referring to the sacred landscape of India as defined by the esoteric tantric tradition of the Yoginītantras. Rather than localising the pan-Indian sacred landscape of this tradition by recreating it within the

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tioned architectural drawing from the mid-eighteenth century that was made in context of the renovation undertaken at that time.

[55] See von Rospatt 1999, pp. 134–139.

confines of the Valley, an approach also adopted (see below), the myth renders Nepal sacred independently from such Buddhist Indian models.

The *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s approach of sacralizing space by transcending the *nirmāṇa* level is in marked contrast to the strategies identified by Koichi Shinohara in his important work on the creation of sacred space in Buddhist cultures beyond the Buddhist motherland in India.[56] Whether it is by expanding the life story of Śākyamuni or by localizing events of his previous lives or of the lives of particular monks, or whether it is by bringing corporeal or other "relics" such as the Buddha's alms bowl, in all cases the creation of sacred space outside the confines of Northern India hinges, in the literature examined by Shinohara, upon the historical Śākyamuni or a human follower. For the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, by contrast, the point of reference is not Śākyamuni but the principle of buddhahood itself, of which the historical Śākyamuni is but a reflection. It localises the manifestation of absolute buddhahood in Nepal and thereby expresses that the ontological center of Buddhism is located in the Nepal Valley and not on the Gangetic plain. Thus the Svayambhū myth does not only account for the sacred rock enshrined by the *caitya* in Buddhist terms, but it also serves the broader agenda of centering Buddhism in Nepal, independently from the lost Indian Buddhist homeland. Though there is no evidence to substantiate this, it cannot be ruled out that the name Svayambhū, which predates the disappearance of Buddhism in India proper by several centuries, already encapsulated the seeds of the Svayambhū myth. However this may be, what matters is that only after this disappearance the Svayambhū myth came to the forefront and assumed its pivotal function in determining the Newars' understanding of their tradition in terms of this myth.

The *Svayambhūpurāṇa* does not connect to classical Indian Buddhist narrative themes (as Shinohara's material does), but tellingly employs instead—possibly with the geologically informed awareness that the Valley may once have been covered by water[57]—the myth of the drained lake

[56]Koichi Shinohara: "Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places: The Record of Mt. Lu by Chen Shunyu," *Asiatische Studien* 53,4 (1999), pp. 937–964. Cf. also Koichi Shinohara: "The Story of the Buddha's begging Bowl: Imagining a Biography and Sacred Places," in *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place. Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions*, ed. by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003, pp. 68–107.

[57]There are other mythical episodes in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* that are rooted in factual history. As mentioned, the account that the self-arisen *dharmadhātu* was first covered by rock, which was then enshrined inside the *caitya*, tallies with the fact that the *caitya* indeed encases a massive rock. Similarly, the narration that Mañjuśrī came from the north in order to drain the Valley and make it inhabitable matches the fact that the Valley was settled predominantly by people of Central Asian origins.

that is in various forms and guises attested in places across the Himalayan range such as Kashmir and Khotan.[58] The myth has it that the region in

[58]Michael Allen has undertaken a comparative study of such myths in the Himalayan region that tie the origins of a people and their territory to the draining of a prehistorical lake ("'And the Lake Drained Away,' An Essay in Himalayan Comparative Mythology," in: A. W. Macdonald, ed., *Maṇḍala and Landscape*, New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 1997, pp. 435–451). He concluded that these myths "have been part of the cultural heritage of the area for several millennia" (p. 443). John Brough ("Legends of Khotan and Nepal," *BSOAS* vol. 12,2 (1948), pp. 333–339) has argued, more concretely, that the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s myth of the draining of the lake has been taken over directly from Khotan. Recently, Franz-Karl Ehrhard has published a brief five-folio Tibetan register (*dkar chag*) on the Svayambhūcaitya that was composed in 1413, apparently on the occasion of the *caitya*'s renovation that was concluded in that year ("Old And New Tibetan Sources Concerning Svayaṃbhūnāth," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 36 (2007), pp. 105-130). It is entitled "A Register of Noble All [Kinds of] Trees: Mind Support of the Buddhas of the Three Times" (*dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyi thugs kyi rten 'phags pa shing kun gyi dkar chag*). Ehrhard's article includes an annotated translation and a transcript and facsimile reproduction of the Tibetan original, which was first published in 1976 (for bibliographical details see Ehrhard 2007, p. 109, n. 6) but went largely unnoticed until Ehrhard grew attention to it ("Further Renovations of Svayambhunath Stupa (from the 13th to the 17th Centuries)," in: *Ancient Nepal*, vol. 123–125 (1991), pp. 10-20). The register mentions as its main source the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇasūtra*. The latter text recounts the mythical origins of Khotan and includes the disclosure of the Oxhorn (*gośṛṅga*) mountain and the origins of a *stūpa* called Goma sa la gan dha (on the dubious spelling see Ehrhard 2007, p. 111, n. 8). Though not explicitly replacing Khotan (*li yul*) with Nepal (*bal yul*), the register does associate the mythical events of the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇasūtra* with Nepal and the Svayambhūcaitya. This does not seem to be an innovation, for the register's author, Chos-skyabs dpal bzang-po, states in the colophon that he relied on earlier registers. It is intriguing that the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇasūtra* and its myths of the drained lake and the Oxhorn mountain were associated with Nepal and the site of Svayambhū already at the beginning of the fifteenth century (and before), i.e. roughly in the period when the core of the Svayambhūpurāṇa may have taken shape. This would seem to lend weight to Brough's claims that the Purāṇa is based on Khotanese legends. However, crucial elements of the Purāṇa diverge significantly from the Khotanese legends. Most importantly, the construction of the Svayambhūcaitya above the self-manifested *dharmadhātu* differs from the Khotanese legends where the principal *stūpa*, the mentioned Go ma sa la gan dha, is located on the banks of a river and, in at least one version, owes its sanctity to the relics of the Buddha Kāśyapa that it enshrines (ibid.). Hence, the register's identification of the two *stūpa*s seems superficial, and may only owe to the author's desire to adduce a scriptural source (i.e. the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇasūtra*) in order to account for the particular sanctity of the Svayambhūcaitya. In other words, it is conceivable that the core of the Svayambhū myth is not rooted in Khotanese legends, but was, because of its evident similarity, connected with these legends by the author (and by other Tibetan savants) seeking a scriptural basis for the Svayambhū narrative. In support of such a hypothesis one could point out with Michael Allen that "lake draining myths" are not unique to Khotan but popular across the Himalayan region.

This is not the place to further engage with the thorny question of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s dependence upon the Khotanese legends recorded in the *Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇasūtra*

question was once covered by waters before it became emptied, often by a cultural hero figure, and thereby transformed into a land populated by people. The *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s narration of the spontaneous manifestation of the *dharmadhātu-caitya* upon a lotus flower of the lake does not only account for the sacredness of the Svayambhūcaitya itself, but it renders the entire Nepal Valley as the locus of this manifestation a sacred place intimately connected with buddhahood. This sense of sacredness is reinforced by the account that, even before the manifestation of Svayambhū, Nepal was in its covered state as lake a sacred site that attracted the previous Buddha Vipaśvin and other pilgrims. Moreover, the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* underscores the sacredness of Nepal by identifying the sacred shrines and places that came to constitute the Valley's sacred topography once it had been drained, a topic studied by Bernhard Kölver in his paper "Stages in the Evolution of a World Picture."[59] All this renders Nepal independently from India a thoroughly Buddhist place that is ideally suited for the pursuit of religion. This suitedness is expressed in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* by recounting that the Buddha Śākyamuni takes his followers to Svayambhū because this is the perfect place for them to formally generate the aspiration to attain buddhahood (*bodhicitta*). Moreover, the text explicitly likens Nepal to *sukhāvatī*, that is, an autonomous paradisal realm where a particular Buddha (Amitābha) manifests himself to his followers who are reborn there, so that they may practice and realize his teaching without encoun-

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and related works—a question which at any rate is only of relevance for parts of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, as much of its narrative has no direct or indirect parallel in the Khotanese legends and draws on mythological themes (and also on historical events) that must have their origins elsewhere. I like to note, however, that I am skeptical about Brough's hypothesis that the sacred myths about the origins of the Nepal Valley could have simply been "revealed" to the Newars by Tibetans (p. 339: "We may therefore imagine that some Tibetan lama who was familiar with the old Tibetan texts dealing with the legends and traditions of Li [i.e. Khotan] had attributed them to Nepal. The Nepalese who, as Hodgson found, held the Tibetans in high esteem in religious matters, would doubtless not have been averse to accepting such a revelation, and would assuredly have had little difficulty in finding appropriate sacred sites to adorn with the legends."). While the Newars may have had (as they indeed have today) great respect for particular Tibetan religious figures, the Tibetan tradition at large has—excepting the circles of Newar traders with links to Tibet—not been viewed as a relevant source of revelation, and accordingly Tibetan Buddhist texts have until the twentieth century not been transmitted to the Newars. Rather, there is an awareness among the Newars that the Tibetans have received Buddhism form India, at times mediated through Nepal, and hence Newars tend to see the Tibetans to be at the receiving end of religious transmission. It is for this reason that after the demise of Buddhism in the Indian heartland, rather than affiliating themselves with Tibetan Buddhism and tapping its strength, the Newar Buddhists reinvented their tradition on their own terms.

[59]Published in *Numen* 32 (1986), pp. 131–168.

tering any obstacles or hardship.[60] Though the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* refers with this characterization to a golden age before the present dark age, the *kaliyuga*, it clearly serves to depict Nepal even now as a blessed country, a *puṇyabhūmi*, particularly favourable for the pursuit of Buddhism. This is helped by the continued existence of the many sacred sites spread over Nepal that are identified in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*. They link the present scene to the paradisal prehistorical landscape painted by this text.

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In addition to the myth of the self-arisen *dharmadhātu-caitya*, which constitutes the ontological center of its universe and centers Buddhism in Nepal, the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* offers a different perspective that implicitly connects Nepal to India by rendering it part of the sacred landscape of larger India. It narrates that the drained Valley assumed the form of an *upacchandoha*, that is a particular kind of seat (*pīṭha*) for a deity that functions as a place for ascetic practices associated in Buddhism with the Yoginītantras.[61] In this context the Valley is explicitly named "Himālaya." Moreover, the Valley is identified with a particular "ground", that is, stage, of bodhisattvahood, namely the fifth, so-called *sudurjayā* (lit. "very difficult to conquer") *bodhisattvabhūmi*, with a particular form of perfection, namely the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) and with a particular form of gnosis, namely the realization that phenomena are, in truth, without origination (*anutpādajñāna*).[62] The *Svayambhūpurāṇa* goes on to relate: "and here as the presiding deity in the world (*loka*), the goddess

[60] So the middle-length version (ch. 4, 162) and the long version (p. 179,4).

[61] The term *upacchandoha* and its corollary chando feature in a list of ten practitioner places (*pīṭha*, *upapīṭha*, *kṣetra*, *upakṣetra*, *chandoha*, *upacchandoha*, *melāpaka*, *upamelāpaka*, *śmaśāna*, *upaśmaśāna*) that is prominent in the Cakrasaṃvara/Vajrayoginī tradition. For details, see for instance, Elizabeth English: *Vajrayoginī, Her Visualisations, Rituals, and Forms* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002: pp. 196f.). For a treatment of the identification of Nepal as *upacchandoha* in the Buddhist literature see K. Yoshizaki's paper "Samvara mandara ni okeru upachandoha: Himāraya to shite no Katomanzu bonchi [Upacchandoha in the Saṃvara-maṇḍala, The Kathmandu Valley as Himālaya]" (Bukkyōgaku 39, 1997, pp. (1)–(21)), which Iain Sinclair kindly brought to my attention. Yoshizaki adduces the Saṃvarodayatantra (vi.17) which—unlike the earlier Hevajratantra (vi.16)—identifies Kāñci and Himālaya as *upacchandoha*. The mentioned list of ten practitioner places and their identification with places in India has its roots in tantric Śaiva traditions and their precursors. The terms corresponding to *chandoha* and *upacchandoha* used in that tradition are saṃdoha and upasaṃdoha. I am not sure what the literal meaning of *saṃdoha* (whence *chandoha* is derived) should be here, and hence leave *upacchandoha* (lit: supplementary *chandoha*) untranslated in this paper.

[62] Short version, fol. 12r4–12v1: *yo 'sau mahāhradabhūmipradeśaḥ so 'yam api nirjalatvād upacchandoh*[*o*] *bhūtvā vyavasthitaḥ parvataiḥ samantataḥ parivṛtaś ca. ayaṃ ca nāmnā himālayaś cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍalākāraḥ sudurjayābhūmisvarūpaḥ prajñāsamutpāda-*

Khagānanā (lit. the "Bird-faced one") appeared in the shape of the *yoni*, extending through the three worlds, (viz.) heaven, the world of mortals (and the underworld)... In her innate form (*svarūpa*) of 'dharma-origin' (*dharmodaya*, i.e. vulva) she permeated the three worlds."[63]

With this the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* alludes to the tantric cult of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī. In their *maṇḍala* the center is surrounded by three concentric circles of eight deities each, which are dedicated respectively to body, speech and mind (*kāya*, *vāk* and *citta*). As the northwestern deity in the *vāk* circle, Khagānanā features either as the consort of Virūpākṣa or—in the Vajravārāhī-centered version of the *maṇḍala*, the Vajravārāhyabhyudaya-maṇḍala—alone (cf. English, p. 59). As attested in the *sādhana* text of Vajravārāhī edited by English (pp. 274f), Khagānanā is identified in this context with the region called "Himālaya," the type of practitioner's place called *upacchandoha* and the *sudurjayā* Bodhisattvabhūmi, as well as the *yoni*,[64] precisely as the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* has it for the drained Valley. Thus, in contrast to the Svayambhū myth, which centers Buddhism in Nepal independently from India, the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* in this context constitutes the sanctity of Nepal by drawing on the pan-Indian tradition of the Yoginītantras that thrived in India between the

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jñānasvabhāvaś ca.

Middle-length version, ch. 3, 78–79:

> *tadāsau bhūtalo ramyaḥ samantato nagair vṛtaḥ* |
> *upacchandoha ity ākhyo himālayo* <'>*pi cocyate* || *78* ||
> *sudurjjayāsvarūpā bhūḥ prajñājñān[ā]nubhāvinī* ||
> *herukamaṇḍalākārā bhūtvā samavatiṣṭhate* || *79* ||

Cf. long version, pp. 174,11–179,4.

[63]Long version, p. 179,5–8:

> *atra ceyaṃ pradhānā yā devī loke khagānanā* |
> *yonyākāreṇa saṃjātā svargamartty[a]trilokagā* ||
> ...
> *dharmodayāsvarūpeṇa trailokye ca prakhyāpitā* ||

Cf. short version, fol. 12v1f.: *atraiveyam api pradhānībhūtvā khagānanā devī lokatrayaṃ vyāpya yonyākāreṇa prādurbhūtā.*

Middle-length version, ch. 3, 80:

> *tatrāpi ca pradhānā śrīmahādevī khagānanā* |
> *dharmmodayā samudbhūtā santiṣṭhante jagaddhite* ||

[64]In the Vajrayoginī tradition, the 24 goddesses of the *kāya*, vāc and citta circles are—as part of the practice of generating the body as a *maṇḍala* (*kāyamaṇḍala*)—equated with different parts of Vajravārāhī's body which the practitioner is to generate mentally as his own body (for details, see E. English, pp. 197–203). Among them Khagānanā is identified with the sexual organ. English, p. 511, n. 577 discusses the confusion regarding the gendering of this organ as penis or *yoni*.

tenth and twelfth centuries. More precisely, it connects to the Vajravārāhī cult that names "Himālaya" (= Nepal) as one of the twenty-four sacred places that are represented by the twenty-four deities of the aforementioned *kāya vāk citta* circles of the Cakrasaṃvara/Vajravārāhī-maṇḍala. It also accords with the closely related tantric tradition of Śaivism with a Śākta orientation that identifies *yoginī* goddesses with particular regions of the sacred landscape of India. As Alexis Sanderson reports on the basis of literary sources that can be dated back to at least the tenth century,[65] there exists the tantric tradition of identifying Nepāla as a *mahāpīṭha* (great seat) with the goddess Guhyeśvarī as presiding deity. Guhyeśvarī manifests herself, like Khagānanā, in the form of the *yoni*. The original location of the Guhyeśvarī shrine in Nepal is uncertain,[66] but the present-day site in the vicinity of Paśupatināth, several miles east of Svayambhū, has fulfilled this function at the very least since the seventeenth century (cf. Michaels 1996, pp. 318f). In accordance with Guhyeśvarī's equation with the *yoni*, she manifests herself here in the form of a well in the ground (*kuṇḍa*) that has since 1654 been enshrined in a temple then built by king Pratāpamalla. Hindu Paurānic legend, as recorded in the Nepāla-Māhātmya, identifies this opening in the ground as the place where the *yoni* of Parvatī fell when her disintegrating corpse was scattered all over the earth. There is evidence for the equation of Guhyeśvarī and Khagānanā in Buddhist[67] and

[65]Quoted on pp. 315f of Axel Michaels' article "Goddess of the Secret. Guhyeśvarī in Nepal and her Festival" (published in Axel Michaels et al., eds., *Wild Goddesses in India and Nepal*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1996, pp. 343–354).

[66]In the vicinity of Bālāju in the northern part of the Valley there is a Guhyeśvarī shrine commonly known as "Old (*purāṇo/pulāṃ*) Guhyeśvarī" (see Michaels 1996, p. 311). It is frequented in particular by Buddhists. On occasion of the mentioned pilgrimage to Jāmāḥcva on *lhutipunimā*, it is, so Niels Gutschow (in an email from June 9, 2005), worshipped as the opening from which the lotus flower planted by Vipaśvin sprouted. It is uncertain how far this practice dates back, but it obviously supports claims that for the Buddhist tradition this shrine marks the original seat of the goddess Guhyeśvarī in the Valley. Besides this shrine at Bālāju, there is also an opening on the final section of the eastern stairs leading up to Svayambhū that is identified as seat of Guhyeśvārī.

[67]Modern versions explicitly identify Khagānanā with the Guhyheśvarī shrine; so e.g. Badrīratna Bajrācārya: *Śrī Svayambhū Mahāpurāṇa*, Kathmandu: privately published by Sānumāyā Tulādhara, 1983: p. 32, and Mana Bajra Bajracharya, translator, and Warren W. Smith, ed.: *Mythological History of the Nepal Valley from Svayambhu Purana*, Kathmandu: Avalok Publ., 1978: p. 14.) Such an identification is attested also in the long version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* in the fourth chapter (p. 258,3–5). In the aforementioned Wright Chronicle Guhyeśvarī has replaced Khagānanā who goes entirely unmentioned. In a further step, the English translation identifies Guhyeśvarī with Svayambhū (p. 80: "Guhjēsvarī in the form of the Svayambhū light"), but this is a misrendering of the Nepalese original which says "taking *darśan* of the blessed Svayambhū in the form of light and of Guhyeśvarī" (Cambridge manuscript add. 1952a, 3b2: ... śrīsvayaṃbhū

reportedly also Śaiva tradition.[68] Hence the mentioned identification of Nepal as seat of Guhyeśvarī indirectly confirms the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s claim that the region presided over by Khagānanā and called "Himālaya" in the Vajrayoginī tradition is indeed Nepal.

In contrast to her peripheral position in the Cakrasaṃvara/Vajravārāhī-maṇḍala, the characterization of Khagānanā, in particular as found in the long version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* (pp. 179,7–180,17), renders her not as a presiding deity of a peripheral region, but as the supreme universal goddess. She is characterized as "the one mother" (*ekā mātā*), the "begetter of all Tathāgatas" (*sarvatathāgatānāṃ jananī*) and generator "of all the three worlds" (*trailokyajananī*). Her role of universal mother goddess is not purely Buddhist. The text explicitly states that Khagānanā assumes "for all people all forms", being "Buddhist mother" (*bauddhamātā*) for "past, future and present Tathāgatas as well as for all Buddhist disciples," while "for Śaivas she assumes the form of Śiva, to Vaiṣṇavas she is Vaiṣṇavī and to Brahmans she is Brahmaṇī."[69]

The text elaborates that "for monks, nuns and elders, as well as for all Bodhisattva Mahāsattvas, and for male and female lay followers, (that is) for all inclined towards enlightenment (*bodhibhāgin*), she has the form of Prajñāpāramitā and is the begetter of all 'Buddhists' (*bauddha*)."[70]

Thus Khagānanā in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* becomes the supreme and

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jyotīrūpakā ra guhyeśvarīkā darśana garī ...). The identification of Khagānanā with Guhyeśvarī (and Nairātmā) is also suggested by a few Buddhist tantric songs, where she features as Khagamukha-devī (which also means Bird-Faced Goddess). More precisely, this is the case in the songs *Tridalakamala* (p. 28), *Guhyeśvarī* (pp. 123f) and *Guhyeśvarī (jalarūpa)* (pp. 213f) published in the first volume of Ratnakājī Bajracharya's Anthology (1996). This has already been pointed out by Yoshizaki Kazumi in his paper "Virūpākṣa and Khagānanā in the Kathmandu Valley" (*The Mikkyo Bunka—Journal of Esoteric Buddhism*, vol. 201, 1998, pp. [1]–[21]; for an English summary see Yoshizaki 2006).

[68] According to Sthaneshwar Timalsina (oral communication), "Khagānanā" is one of the names by which Guhyeśvarī is known and invoked in Śaiva tantric practice.

[69] Long version, p. 180,11–15:

> *sarveṣām api sattvānāṃ jananī viśvarūpiṇī* ||
> *atītānāgatair buddhaiḥ pratyutpannais tathāgataiḥ* |
> *sarvair bauddhair api śiṣyaiḥ bauddhamātā prakīrttitā* ||
> *śaivānāṃ śivarūpī sā vaiṣṇavānāṃ ca vaiṣṇavī* |
> *brāhmāṇānāṃ brahmaṇīti viśvarūpī iva sthitā* ||

[70] Long version, p. 180,6–9:

> *bhikṣūṇāṃ bhikṣuṇīnāñ ca sthavirāṇāṃ tathā api* |
> *sarveṣāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ mahāsattvānāṃ ca tathā* ||
> *upāśakopāśikānāṃ sarveṣāṃ bodhibhāginām* |
> *prajñāpāramitārūpī bauddhānāṃ jananī tathā* ||

primal goddess beyond the distinctions separating Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism and Brahmanism, the female embodiment of the "absolute" from which all other beings, including Buddhas, gods and so on, derive.[71] It is noteworthy how the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* depicts Khagānanā as the supreme deity for Hindus too, be they Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas or Brāhmaṇas. This inclusivistic approach reflects its above-mentioned agenda to promote Buddhism in an environment increasingly dominated by Hindu traditions.[72]

In accordance with her elevation to the status of supreme goddess, after her appearance Khagānanā features in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* as a foremost object of veneration. Thus she is continually worshipped by the *ācārya* Mañjudeva himself who, for this purpose, seles on the Mañjuśrī hill (the eastern peak of the Svayambhū hill) once he has drained the Valley. Moreover, all pilgrims coming to Nepal do so in order to worship Khagānanā together with, and normally even before, the self-arisen *dharmadhātu-caitya* and the *ācārya* Mañjudeva. Khagānanā's appearance and prominence in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* reflects the perspective of the esoteric tradition in

[71] In accordance with this elevation of Khagānanā to the rank of supreme deity, the long version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* (p. 180,4) relates her name to the fact that she has the color of space (*khavarṇa*) and is appearing as void (*śūnyarūpiṇī*). This suggests that *kha-ga* in Khagānanā is not to be understood only in the usual sense of "air-goer," that is "bird". If *kha* (= "space") is understood to comprise all three worlds, *kha-ga* may mean "extending [everywhere] in space," in accordance with her above-mentioned qualification as "extending through the three worlds, (viz.) heaven, the world of mortals (and the underworld)" (*svarga-martty[a]-triloka-gā*). Cf. the mentioned short version's qualification of Khagānanā as "penetrating the three worlds" (*lokatrayaṃ vyāpya*).

[72] It would be naïve to view this inclusivistic tendency as an expression of uninterested tolerance. Rather, the type of narrative literature examined here conveys occasionally a spirit of fierce rivalry. Consider, for instance, the teaching in the long version of the Svayambhūpurāṇa that Buddhists engaging in Śaiva practice will be damned to hell, while Śaivas who turn towards Buddhism will reach Sukhāvatī (p. 500, 9–13: *bauddhalokā gaṇā ye 'pi śaivadharmmaṃ kariṣyati| te sarvve kṛtapāpāc ca nārakañ ca gamiṣyati| śaivalokā janā ye 'pi bauddhadharmmaṃ pravarttate| tasya puṇyapraśādāc ca sukhāvatīṃ gamiṣyati||*. The lack of concord in number, which is not a feature in Newari, is indicative of the tendency in this text to substitute singulars for plurals. Cf. Kölver 1999, p. 204). Horst Brinkhaus has detected similar evidence of antagonism in his analysis of the Hindu textual tradition ("*Nepālamāhātmya*") matching the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* ("References to Buddhism in the Nepālamāhātmya," *JNRC* 4 (1980), pp. 273–286). On the other hand, there are also passages in some versions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* that embrace the worship of shrines which are commonly perceived to be Śaiva. Most importantly, the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* advocates the worship of a set of eight shrines known as the Passionless Ones (*vītarāga*) (middle-length version ch. 4, 71–75). Despite their association with a set of eight Bodhisattvas, the middle-length version (ch. 4, 75) connects these *vītarāga*s explicitly with Mahādeva, that is Śiva, and accordingly sets forth that a fruit of their worship (*pūjāphala*) is the entry into the abode of Śiva (*śivālaya*) (middle-length version ch. 4, 110–135).

general and of the evolved Yoginītantra tradition in particular, in which the female goddess (Vajravārāhī or one of her ectypes) supersedes her male counterpart as whose consort she started out (Cakrasaṃvara or one of his ectypes), so as to become herself the supreme deity, embodying the principle of buddhahood in female form.[73] Inasmuch as the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* first recounts the Svayambhū myth and establishes the sacredness of the self-arisen *caitya*, and then introduces Khagānanā and elevates her to the status of supreme goddess, its narrative sequence accords with the chronological progression from exoteric Mahāyāna to the esoteric tradition of the Yoginītantras.[74] Moreover, in the recounting recorded in the historical chronicles[75] and in modern versions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*,[76] Guhyeśvarī (= Khagānanā) and the self-arisen *dharmadhātu-caitya* are connected by way of the primal lotus flower upon which this *caitya* arose. More precisely, the *kuṇḍa* shrine of Guhyeśvarī is identified as the spot where this lotus flower sprouted from the bed of the lake. When the lake had been drained, water welled up at that very spot. By force of meditation Mañjudeva

[73]Note that the superiority of Khagānanā in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* is matched by the dominance of Vajrayoginī at Sako, who is the unrivalled presiding deity at that site. It is in accordance with her position as supreme goddess in the esoteric tradition of the Yoginītantras that her temple dwarfs the adjacent *caitya* and the temple housing it, not to mention the other surrounding structures (cp. plate 6).

[74]Besides lay devotional activities such as *vrata*s, I refer with the term "exoteric Mahāyāna tradition" also to rituals that are rooted in the Yogatantras. In this I follow the standard practice and understanding in the Newar Buddhist tradition. It treats rituals rooted in the Yogatantras as exoteric. Accordingly such rituals may, and indeed usually are, performed in public, whereas access (be it as active participant or mere bystander) to rituals pertaining to the tradition of the Yoginītantras requires corresponding, higher *abhiṣeka* initiations. In the Newar tradition consecration and other suchlike rituals dealing with *caitya*s and similar exoteric objects of worship belong to the Yogatantra tradition. More concretely, the *caitya* is treated in accordance with the tradition of the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha as a Vajradhātu-maṇḍala or a variant thereof. It assigns Vairocana to the center of the *caitya* and Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi to the cardinal directions. It also includes peripheral deities drawn from the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala or the closely related Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara-maṇḍala (for details see von Rospatt 1999, pp. 122–125). This ritual practice accords precisely with the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*'s conception of what Svayambhū is, namely a *jinālaya* and *tathāgatāśraya* (see above), that is an abode and ground for the Five Buddhas. In the Yoginītantra tradition, by contrast, the basic matrix for ritual activities is no longer the Vajradhātumaṇḍala with its Vairocana-centered setup of the Five Buddhas. Rather, the rituals focus on a wrathful manifestation of Akṣobhya (who now occupies the center) such as Cakrasaṃvara and/or his consort Vajravārāhī (or another manifestation of Vajrayoginī). To be sure, in practice the world of Yogatantra and Yoginītantra rituals are not as strictly separated as I make them out to be here, but this does not impinge on the principal difference between them.

[75]See the Padmagiri Chronicle (Hasrat, p. 7) and "Wright" Chronicle (p. 79).

[76]See Badrīratna Bajrācārya 1983, p. 32 and Mana Bajra Bajracharya, p. 14.

suppressed the water spouting forth there so that it would not flood the drained lake. This identification of Khagānanā with the root of the lotus flower is in keeping with her characterization as the primordial principle from which all Buddhas emanate. This shows how the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* manages to convey in mythological terms the perspective of the esoteric tradition of Newar Buddhism.

There would appear to be a certain incongruity between the centering of Buddhism in Nepal, which I have identified as an underlying concern of the Svayambhū myth, and the sacralization of Nepal according to the Yoginītantra tradition which is anchored in a pan-Indian vision of sacred space.[77] However, the pan-Indian perspective of the Vajrayoginītantra tradition is minimised by the fact that the Purāṇa refers to the link between Khagānanā and her place within the larger Indian sacred landscape only in a coded way (which but few learned tantrikas understand) by identifying her seat as Himālaya, characterising it as an *upacchandoha* pīṭha and identifying it with the *sudurjayā* Bodhisattvabhūmi. By contrast, the Purāṇa's treatment of Khagānanā as supreme goddess and origin of all means that, by extension, her seat, i.e. Nepal, comes to constitute the center of the universe generated by her. This is reinforced by the identification of Khagānanā with the root of the lotus stalk in later stages of the narrative which links her firmly to the Svayambhū myth and Nepal. Moreover,

[77]Even if there were a real incongruity, the authors of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* would presumably still have felt obliged to include the Vajrayoginī tradition with its pan-Indian perspective. This perspective was probably the dominant way of configuring Nepal before the Svayambhū myth became prominent—note that it continues to be conspicuous in the *saṃkalpa* which situates the ritual to be performed in space and time (see below)—and hence could not have simply been ignored. By contrast, its inclusion concurs with the pervasive tendency in Newar Buddhism to bring the perspective of the esoteric tradition to bear. For instance, when constructing *caitya*s they are generally treated according to the Yogatantra and its *pañcabuddha* configuration centered on Vairocana, but yet a *maṇḍala* is also inserted in which Akṣobhhya (who is usually housed in the East) trades places with Vairocana and becomes the principal Buddha in accordance with a higher tantric perspective that privileges Akṣobhya. In this way the *caitya* is also imbued with the superior qualities of the esoteric tradition. Similarly, even while focusing on the Svayambhūcaitya, which is explicitly identified in one chapter with the Dharmadhātuvāgiśvaramaṇḍala and hence the Yogatantra (cf. von Rospatt 1999, pp. 126f), the Purāṇa is invested with additional authority by accommodating the perspective of the superior Yoginītantra tradition. As has been noted by others (see e.g. Tanemura 2004, p. 81), the same approach lies also at the basis of Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, which was probably written in the second half of the twelfth century, and in many ways is the foundational work of the Newar Buddhist ritual tradition. It, too, is based on the Vajradhātu system of the Yogatantras (more precisely, of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*), but allows for the practices of the esoteric tradition, including the initiations (*abhiṣeka*) of the higher tantras that entail sexual practices, be they only ritually enacted in imagination or actually performed.

the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* veils the pan-Indian orientation of the Vajrayoginī tradition when it relates that the drained Valley assumed the form of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala.[78] Even though the versions examined here characterize the Valley in this way only in all brevity by a single attribute without further explication, this clearly suggests that the Nepal Valley, rather than being just a part of the pan-Indian Cakrasaṃvara, constitutes this *maṇḍala* in its entirety and hence also on this count forms the center of the universe.[79]

[78]Unlike the short and long versions (p. 176,15 and p. 177,7) which refer to the lord of the *maṇḍala* as Saṃvara rather than Cakrasaṃvara, the middle-length version (see n. 62 above) says that the drained Valley "assumed the form of the Herukamaṇḍala" (*herukamaṇḍalākārā bhūtvā*). The context of the passage and other considerations leave no doubt that Heruka here refers to Cakrasaṃvara and not to Hevajra or, even less likely, another Heruka-type manifestation such as Buddhakapāla. It should be mentioned, however, that following Badrīratna Bajrācārya's Newari rendering of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* in ten chapters, Mañjudeva worshipped "Khagānanādevī Nairātmā Guhyeśvarīdevī" (p. 32) after he had forced the water to stop welling up (see above). On the basis of this passage Naresh Man Bajracharya argues in his above-cited paper (p. 7) that the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* conceives of Nepal as a Hevajra/Nairātmyā-maṇḍala, so that the mention of Heruka in the middle-length version could arguably refer to Hevajra. However, in the versions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* studied by me, Nairātmyā is not mentioned together with Khagānanā and does not feature in the way Badrīratna Bajrācārya's version has it. Moreover, it is not clear whether the three goddesses' names are given like this in the sources used by Badrīratna Bajrācārya, or whether he has here taken the liberty to enlarge upon the text. On the other hand, the sixth verse of a text published in English translation by Brian Hodgson under the title "Naipāliya Devata Kalyāna" (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 12,1 (1843, pp. 400–409) identifies "Guyheswari, made manifest by Mañja Deva" as Nairātmyā. Moreover, it is true that Guhyeśvarī features in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, particularly in later versions, and outside the Purāṇa there is indeed a well-attested tradition of equating her with Nairātmyā (cf. Michaels 1996, p. 319). One could interpret this to imply that Nepal is configured as a *maṇḍala* with Hevajra/Nairātmyā in the center, but I am not aware of a tradition that actually says so. At any rate, the mentioned reference to Nairātmyā in Badrīratna Bajrācārya's version does not suffice as proof witnessing to the conception of the Valley as a Hevajra/Nairātmyā-maṇḍala *in the Svayambhūpurāṇa*, and it certainly cannot counter-balance the overwhelming evidence that points to the Purāṇa's treatment of the Valley in terms of the Cakrasaṃvara/Vajrayoginī tradition.

[79]A similar localization of a tradition that presumably did not converge originally upon Nepal can be found in the sixth chapter of the short version of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*. It relates that once, when teaching the Mañjuśrī-Nāmasaṅgīti in the Vikramaśīla Vihāra, the *ācārya* Dharmaśrīmitra was incapable of explaining the esoteric meaning of the twelve vowel letters (for details see von Rospatt 1999, pp. 134–139). In order to gain this knowledge, he sets off from India to seek out Mañjuśrī at his abode in China. However, the encounter with Mañjuśrī takes place in the Nepal Valley where Mañuśrī, knowing that Dharmaśrīmitra would pass here on his way to China, manifests himself in the form of Mañjudeva, When Mañjuśrī initiates Dharmaśrīmitra on that occasion so that he can receive the esoteric teaching on the twelve letters, he draws for that purpose a Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṇḍala out of the Svayambhū *caitya* (short

There can be no doubt that the identification of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala with the Nepal Valley predates the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, but I am not aware of evidence that would allow us to determine precisely when the Valley came to be configured in this way. At any rate, unlike the Svayambhū myth, this identification was not motivated by the need to compensate for the loss of the Buddhist motherland. Rather, it is expressive of the tendency to recreate a particularly configured sacred pan-Indian landscape within the confines of a certain region or locale, so that it mirrors the sacred landscape of larger India and becomes imbued with its sacredness. This tendency is well-attested in both Buddhist and Hindu contexts. As mentioned above, it is particularly conspicuous in the tradition of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala. Especially in Tibetan Buddhism the twenty-four sites became a stock set to be projected onto a given area in order to render it sacred and well-suited for tantric practice.[80]

The *Svayambhūpurāṇa* does not ignore the sacralization of Nepal in terms of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala, but this is clearly not a major concern. Rather, it is motivated by the agenda to center Buddhism in Nepal independently of India, and for this it employs the Svayambhū myth as its principal device. This is a novel strategy that departs from the Cakrasaṃvara tradition and other models employed for the sacralization of Buddhist India that I am aware of. It accords with the Purāṇa's approach in that, when sketching the sacred landscape of Nepal, it does not take up the scheme of the twenty-four sacred sites of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala, but instead populates the Valley—in terms which in later versions of the Purāṇa become increasingly indebted to Śaivism—with the mentioned set of eight *vītarāga*s and a further set of twelve *tīrtha*s, that is, holy places situated at confluences of rivers.[81] To be sure, outside the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* there is indeed a tradition of identifying the twenty-four sacred

version 29r1f *atra dharmadhātor dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṇḍalaṃ pratyakṣaṃ visphāryya tenaiva maṇḍalena ... dharmaśrīmitraṃ divyavidhinābhiṣiktavān.*).

Though I have no proof for the independent existence of the story of Dharmaśrīmitra's quest of the sacred meaning of the twelve letters, I presume that it was not made up from scratch by the composer(s) of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* but rather incorporated because of is link with Mañjuśrī. In the process, so my hypothesis, the narrative was adapted to the agenda of centering Buddhism in Nepal by locating the key event of the encounter with Mañuśrī in the Valley, and by connecting this encounter to the Svayambhū *caitya*. Thus I read the narrative of the sixth chapter as a further episode that marks out Nepal as the center of Buddhism, this time by providing the stage for the celebrated encounter of a famous Indian master with Mañjuśrī from China.

[80]See, for instance, Nagwang Zangpo: *Sacred Ground. Jamgon Kongtrul on Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography*, Ithaca. NY: Snow Lion Public., 2001.

[81]For details see Kölver 1986

sites of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala within the Valley and its vicinity,[82] and, as a consequence, there is and has been for some time—it remains to be traced in written and other sources since when—the cult of visiting these twenty-four places within one year and engaging in tantric practices there (*pīṭhapūjā*).[83] However, there is little consensus in the precise identification of the twenty-four sites except for a tendency to identify them with the seats of the Aṣṭamātṛkā goddesses (see Yoshizaki in n. 61). As their names indicate, these are mother goddesses who occur in a set of eight. Typically they surround the major Newar towns as protective deities. Though autochthonous in origin, these goddesses have acquired an explicit Hindu identity and bear names thus as Brahmāyanī, Vaiṣṇavī, Indrāṇī, Kaumarī and so on. Their identification with points of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala is not rooted in practice and rather artificial. This and the lack of agreement between the various lists identifying the twenty-four sites of the *maṇḍala* suggest that also beyond the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* the localisation of the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala in the Valley did not catch on in a major way and failed to become an important element of Newar Buddhism.

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[82]For details see Niels Gutschow's study *Stadtraum und Ritual der newarischen Städte im Kathmandu-Tal. Eine architekturanthropologische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart etc.: Kohlhammer, 1982, pp. 23–27), and Naresh Man Bajracharya's above-cited paper *Buddhism in Nepal and Nepal Mandala*. There is surprisingly little agreement between Gutschow's and Vajracharya's list of the twenty-four sites, and they even disagree about the *maṇḍala*'s center. Vajracharya locates it at "Kantewar Chhetrapala at Indrachowk" in the middle of Kathmandu, while Gutschow (who bases himself upon information obtained form the late Dr. Manabajra Bajracharya of Kathmandu) more plausibly identifies the Guhyeśvarī temple close to Deopatan as the center that is to be visited and worshipped after "pilgrimage" to the twenty-four sacred sites in conclusion of the year-long *pīṭha-pūjā*. However, Gutschow and Vajracharya agree in locating the outer circle of the *maṇḍala* well beyond the confines of the Valley. As a result, the *maṇḍala* is not congruent with the drained Valley as the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* sets forth, but includes also the areas outside the Valley that were often under control of the rulers in the Valley and thus considered to form part of what is called nepāla-maṇḍala in inscriptions and elsewhere, a topic that has been treated by Kashinath Tamot in a paper presented at the Conference *Nepal—Current State of Research and Perspectives* held in memory of Prof. Bernhard Kölver in June 2003 in Leipzig. The identification of the extension of the *maṇḍala* with the space claimed by the Nepāla kingdom(s) accords with the wording of the *saṃkalpa* commonly used in Patan that locates the ritual to be performed in "nepālamaṇḍala which has the form of the [Cakra]Samvaramaṇḍala" (see below). It can be witnessed here how the term *maṇḍala* refers to both political and sacred space, with the consequence that the extension of the Cakrasaṃvaramaṇḍala is determined by the (idealized) extension of *nepālamaṇḍala*, the kingdom of Nepal. Despite the gap in time and space, one might regard this as supporting evidence for Ronald Davidson's claim that the prominence and structure of *maṇḍala*s in Vajrayāna Buddhism reflect the political landscape in which they emerged (see chapter 4 of his *Indian Esoteric Buddhism, A Social History of the Tantric Movement*, New York. Columbia University Press, 2002).

[83]For a brief discussion see Gutschow, ibid.

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It is instructive to compare the configuration expressed in the ritual realm, more precisely in the *saṃkalpa*. It names the ritual to be performed (and its agent, the *yajamāna*) and locates the performance in sacred space and time. The versions of the *saṃkalpa* used commonly in the Kathmandu and Patan tradition differ considerably in detail from each other.[84] However, they agree in situating Nepal within Bharata, Jambudvīpa and Āryāvarta, that is, within India proper, and in alluding to elements of the Vajrayoginī tradition by characterising either Nepal or the Svayambhū hillock as an *upacchandoha-pīṭha* corresponding to the *sudurjayā bodhisattvabhūmi* and presided over by Heruka-Virūpākṣa and Khagānanā (Kathmandu) or Guhyeśvarī (Patan).[85] Both, the Kathmandu and Patan versions of the *saṃkalpa* also name the Svayambhūcaitya and allude to the Svayambhū

[84] I have not examined the wording of the *saṃkalpa*s used in other parts of the Valley. Nor did I find the time to trace systematically in historical material how the *saṃkalpa*s used in Kathmandu and Patan evolved over time.

[85] The standard version of the *saṃkalpa* used in Patan has been translated by Gellner (1992, p. 191), the version used in Kathmandu by Iwao Shima (*A Newar Buddhist Temple Mantrasiddhi Mahāvihāra*, Tokyo: ILCAA, 1991: pp. 30f.), albeit in a less than satisfactory manner. Though an interesting topic in its own right, it would go beyond the scope of this paper to compile, analyse and compare the *saṃkalpa* formulas used in the various traditions of the Nepal Valley, both past and present. Here I rather confine myself to reproduce the Sanskrit text of the Kathmandu version, taken from Ratnakājī Bajrācārya's *Kalaśārcanapūjāvidhi* (Kathmandu: Yogāmbara Prakāśan, 1994, p. 5) in slightly edited form: *oṃ adya śrīmacchrīśākyasiṃhatathāgatasya buddhakṣetre bharatakhaṇḍe bhadrakalpe vaivasvatamanvantare himavatparvatadakṣiṇapārśve satyatretādvāparānte kaliyugasya* (note Yoshizaki, Kazumi reads *satyatretādvāparāntakaliyugasya*) *prathamacaraṇe jambudvīpe vāsuk[i]kṣetre āryāvartapuṇyabhūmau nepāladeśe vāgmatyā dakṣiṇabhāge maṇirohiṇyāḥ paścimabhāge prabhāvatyā uttarakoṇe keśāvatyāḥ pūrvakoṇe gopucchagirivare sudurjayābhūmibhāge upacchandohapīṭhe śrīherukavirūpākṣakhagānanādhivāsite anekadevālayasthāne śrīsvayambhūcaityadharmadhātuvāgīśvarasannidhāne* ||

In the version of the *saṃkalpa* reproduced here it is not the drained Valley as in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*, but the hillock of Svayambhū that is qualified as an upacchandohapīṭha dotted with many shrines, inhabited by Virūpākṣa and Khagānanā and corresponding to the *sudurjayā bodhisattvabhūmi*. I wonder, however, whether we should really read the *saṃkalpa* literally in this way. Could it be that the position of these attributes does not follow from the intention to qualify specifically the hillock (*gopucchagirivare*), but rather from their association with the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* and hence the Svayambhūcaitya which is subsequently mentioned? On the other hand, there is some evidence that lends substance to the conception of the Svayambhū hillock in such tantric terms. As mentioned above, the shrine of Śāntipura is dedicated to the cult of Cakrasaṃvara (something noted also in the Svayambhūpurāṇa), and there is an opening in the stairs leading up to Svayambhū that is commonly identified with Guhyeśvarī (and hence Khagānanā).

myth, namely by referring to the Svayambhū hillock with the name Gopucchagiri of the Purāṇa (Kathmandu version) or by mentioning the primordial lake covering the Valley (Patan version). It thus can be witnessed how the earlier construction of Nepal's sacrality as derived from its participation in the sacredness of larger India is supplemented by drawing upon the Svayambhū myth. However, the myth's perspective of Nepal as the ontological center of Buddhism does not come to bear. Thus, despite the reference to the Svayambhū myth and the *caitya*, the original construction of Nepal as sacred space within larger India continues to prevail in ritual practice. By contrast, as we have seen, in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* and oral lore the construction of Nepal as ontological center of the Buddhist world is predominant and not compromised by incorporating elements from the Vajrayoginī tradition. It accords with the conservative nature of ritual acts and enunciations that Nepal continued to be framed in the *saṃkalpa* as part of the sacred landscape of India, even after the Svayambhū myth with its innovative centering of Buddhism in the Valley had gained wide currency in popular imagination and became the chief model for conceptualizing the sacredness of Nepal. On the other hand, the modification of the *saṃkalpa* to include elements from the Svayambhū myth shows that there is also scope for change and adaptation in the ritual domain.

* * *

To sum up, my starting point in this paper was the primordial rock atop the Svayambhū hill. I construed it as an autochthonous sacred site and speculated that it may have been worshipped as an indigenous mother goddess. My next step was the advent of Buddhism and the erection of the Svayambhūcaitya above the mentioned rock. I read the encasing of this rock as an attempt to control and incorporate the autochthonous deity into the fold of Buddhism. I enlarged upon this hypothesis by conjecturing that this deity, rather than being completely subordinated by Buddhism, continued to persist as an ambivalent mother goddess with fearful traits next to the *caitya* and eventually came to assume the identity of Hāratī. I then examined how the Svayambhū myth, too, renders the Svayambhūcaitya as a shrine encasing a self-arisen divine manifestation, albeit not of an autochthonous deity, but of the five transcendental Buddhas who, in their totality, constitute buddhahood. The myth, I argued, served to center Buddhism in Nepal, thereby compensating for the loss of the Buddhist motherland in the South. Finally, I turned to Khagānanā as depicted in the *Svayambhūpurāṇa*. I explained that her superiority in the Purāṇa reflects the perspective of the Yoginītantra tradition and hence of esoteric Newar Buddhism. Rather than identifying Nepal as a peripheral place of

the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala that is mapped onto larger India, the Purāṇa indicates that the Valley constitutes the *maṇḍala* in its entirety. This serves to recreate the sacred landscape of India as defined in this tantric tradition within Nepal. However, this approach of sacralizing Nepal is, unlike the Svayambhū myth, not driven by the agenda to establish the center of Buddhism in Nepal independently from India. Rather, it is typical for the evolved tantric tradition of the Yoginītantras and its technique of rendering a particular area sacred by projecting the Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala onto it.

"Autochthonous deity," "*caitya* of the five Buddhas" and "tantric goddess" mark the three main stages in the evolution of Newar Buddhist religion. Though there is a clear sense of progression, change did not involve substitution, but accommodation and relegation of the superseded stage. Thus from a synchronic perspective, these three stages, i.e. autochthonous religiosity, exoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism and esoteric Vajrayāna can be viewed as the principal layers that make up Newar Buddhist religion. However, to rank them hierarchically as implied by the model of progression only works if we assume a soteriological perspective. A better model looks at them as complementary in function. Accordingly, they continue to coexist as integral elements of a whole at sacred sites such as Svayambhū. There the autochthonous element is represented by the mother goddess identified as Hāratī, as well as by the many sacred stones and suchlike shrines spread over the hillock. Exoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism is embodied by the main *caitya* as well as by the additional major and minor *caitya*s and Buddha and Bodhisattva images at the site, while the esoteric tradition of the Yoginītantras is present through Śāntipura, the shrine dedicated to the worship of (a form of) Saṃvara.

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Plates

(except for plate 1, all photos have been taken by the author)



Plate 1: Aerial photograph (by Ganesh Photo, Kathmandu) of the Svayambhū hillock with the *caitya* and surrounding buildings taken from the Southwest, at a time (c. 1965) when urbanisation had not yet encroached upon the hillock and its surrounding. The buildings enclosing the *caitya* to the South subsided in the meantime in a landslide, and in their stead a large terrace with two new buildings has been constructed.



Plate 2: Worshippers at Svayambhū in the early morning during the month of *guṃlā* (August 2005).



Plate 3: The Svayambhūcaitya from the Northwest with the temple of Hāratī in the foreground.



Plate 4: The finial (*gajur*) of the temple of Hāratī with the Svayambhū-caitya in the background.



Plate 5: The *caitya* at Guṃ Bāhāl, above Sako. It functions as the *kvāpādyaḥ*, that is, the central exoteric deity of the monastery. The rock enshrined by the silver and gilded copper cover, imitating the shape of the Svayambhūcaitya, can be seen at the base.



Plate 6: The two-tiered temple housing the *caitya* depicted in plate 5 is clearly second to the three-tiered Vajrayoginī temple standing next to it.

ISSN 2091-0401

Journal of the Nepal Research Centre

VOLUME XIII

Edited by
Harunaga Isaacson

In collaboration with
Albrecht Hanisch, Kengo Harimoto and Mahes Raj Pant

Vol. XIII 2009

Nepal Research Centre